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M E M O I R S

FOR THE

H I S T O R Y

OF

1608/188

139

Madame de MAINTENON

AND OF THE

L A S T A G E.

Translated from the F R E N C H,

By the A U T H O R of

THE FEMALE QUIXOTE.

V O L. II.

Bonam facile crederes, magnam libenter.

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MEMOIRS

HISTORY



AND OF THE

LAST AGE

Translated from the French

By the Author of the

THE ENGLISH

Vol. II

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MEMOIRS FOR THE HISTORY

OF

Madam de *Maintenon*,

And of the

LAST AGE.

CHAPTER I.

Mademoiselle de Fontanges.



WHILE the marchioness de Montepan, and madame de Maintenon disputed the first place in the king's heart, but with unequal solicitude, and with different views, a rival appeared and took entire possession of it. Mademoiselle de Lude, had but slightly touched it ; one night had seen the beginning and the end of her good fortune. Madame de Grancey had only hopes, the three, mademoiselles la Motte-

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Houdancourt had attempted the conquest of it in vain; madame d'Harcourt had refused the king's offers, and some rambling amours seemed to have taken from the king the habit of subjecting himself to a serious engagement *: but the beauty of mademoiselle de Fontanges, restored to his heart its former capacity of loving with ardour.

Mademoiselle de Fontanges was tall, well made, her complexion of a dazzling whiteness, her beauty would have been absolutely perfect if her hair had not been red; her relations themselves looked on her charms with astonishment, and founded great hopes upon them. From her infancy they had destined her to the conquest she made, and through the interest of the dutchess d'Arpajon procured her the place of maid of honour to the dutchess of Orleans. Her disposition was mild, a little inclined to melancholy, she had the air of a queen, the countenance of a virgin faint, no man could look on her without admiration, few without love.

As soon as she arrived, madame de Montespan ever ready to do herself a mischief, ran to tell the king that the dutchess of Orleans had a young country girl among her maids of honour who was an exact marble statue. Lewis naturally eager to see all beautiful persons, needed not to be incited now; he made a party of hunting for the dutchess of Orleans, mademoiselle de Fontanges was in her train; the marchioness de Montespan perceived her immediately, called her and presented her to the king, to whom she indecently pointed out her beauties with exclamations of surprize and admiration. Mademoiselle de Fontanges expressed in her countenance and behaviour, that sweet confusion so favourable to beauty. The king at one glance, saw more than all the eager curiosity of madame de Montespan; he thought the statue very beautiful, like Pigmalion, he became in love with it, and like him
he

* Maria Angelica de Scoraille de Rouffille, dutchess de Fontanges, she was born in the year 1661, and died 1681.



he animated it ; the duke de Saint Aignan sung his triumph : all that was most noble contributed to his fame, all that was most beautiful served his pleasures.

Madame de Maintenon was oppress'd with grief ; she had no longer any hope of converting the king, he was likely to be enslaved by this new passion for a long series of years. The queen was again plunged into that excess of jealousy and despair from which madame de Maintenon had so lately relieved her ; for the king was beginning to treat her with an appearance of confidence and friendship, which gave great joy to those who wished to see the royal Family happy. Lewis had entertained a passion for a lady whose husband was extremely jealous : the queen having in vain expected him till four o'clock in the morning, sent some of her servants to seek for him all over the castle, and afterwards throughout all Versailles. They went in her name to enquire for the king of all the coquets and all the prudes of the court : they waked madame de Montespan, who said he had not for a long time pass'd a night in her apartments ; from her they went to madame d'Hudicourt who was proud of being suspected, but they found it impossible to discover where the king was. The next day the whole court was full of different conjectures concerning this absence. Some ladies insinuated that they had had the king all night, and boasted of their happiness. Others pretended to be angry at the affront that was offered them : madame de Montespan was overjoyed at this adventure ; the lady who was really guilty turned all the suspicions upon madame de Saint Geran, who, drowned in tears, ran to the apartment of madame de Maintenon, and protested she had never been so highly honoured. The king was so much concerned at this general scandal, that he told the queen the name of his concealed mistress. The queen was extremely surprized, for the king had hardly ever spoke to the lady in publick. When she designed to give me a meeting, said Lewis, she informed me of it by wearing ear-rings of emeralds, and when I solicit-

ed an interview, I put a diamond ring on my little finger to signify my desires.

The king could not live without the pleasing anxiety of love: madame de Maintenon, had exacted too great a sacrifice, he was not yet old enough to obey; he passed whole hours with the fair monitress, he promised her miracles, he durst not talk to her of love. The conversation generally turned upon the gravest subjects, Lewis tho' often tired of them yet could not keep away from her apartment.

Mademoiselle de Fontanges had relations and friends who were extremely attentive to her interest. They gave her instructions for regulating her conduct, which she had great need of, for says the abbé de Choisi, *she was as beautiful as an angel, but excessively foolish.* She made haste to fulfil her destiny; declared mistress to the king, she gave herself up to a boundless grandeur: passed by the queen without saluting her, paid back with usury the insults she had received from the imperious Montespan, expended a hundred crowns a month, was surprized that it should be called prodigality, offended her friends by her indifference, astonished even the courtiers by her ingratitude, she would have had kingdoms to give away; Lewis adored her because he found himself in her boundless generosity, however he was always more sure of her magnificence than her fidelity.

The marchioness de Montespan enraged with the king for this open preference, enraged against herself for having contributed to his passion, for her rival ceased to persecute madame de Maintenon, and turned all her fury upon mademoiselle de Fontanges: that young lady had for her, her charms and the force of novelty, and against her all those who had contributed to raise her fortune, and being treated insolently by her in return: she had madame de Maintenon, who often drew the king to the dauphiness's court, where the conversation was always fine and delicate; she had all the ladies who had designs upon the king, and the marchioness de Montespan who thought she had claims to him.

Father

Father de la Chaise, who governed the king's conscience rather like a christian than a devotee, had long interdicted him the sacraments: the king amorous, more through necessity than inclination, forced an absolution from the father by feigning that he had quitted his mistress. It was believed that the confessor was an enemy to adultery only, and because he inveighed loudly against the king's amour with madame de Montespan, he was accused of favouring his passion for mademoiselle de Fontanges. However the king received the communion,* and there needed no more to make the publick exclaim against the sacrilege.

The duke de Mazarin, the same who had a wife so lovely, so amiable, and knew not how to keep her, acquired great esteem upon this occasion. he was pious even to folly, he demanded a private audience of the king, under pretence that he had something of the utmost consequence to impart to him. The audience was granted, and he told the king, he came to inform him that God had in a dream warned him of an approaching revolution which should overturn the kingdom, unless mademoiselle de Fontanges was instantly dismissed. 'And I, replied the king, warn you to take care of your brain.'

Sister Louisa of the house of Mercy was informed in her retreat of this new engagement: her heart was deeply wounded by it, either through some remains of jealousy, which she probably concealed from herself, or through zeal for the king's salvation: she prevailed upon a bishop who was related to her, to expostulate with the king upon the extreme danger his soul was in. Lewis, surprized at the rude remonstrances of the prelate, said to him, 'You will greatly oblige me, mon-sieur, if you will confine your zeal to your own diocese.'

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* The king received the communion at pentecost: the favour madame de Fontanges enjoys, is solidly established, but what are we to think of his extreme friendship for the other lady? Sevigné's letters.

The divisions that shook the court, spread a gloom over the most magnificent shews and entertainments; in the midst of pleasures, all was inventive malice, and pining discontent. The king drag'd on each side by his two mistresses, had recourse to madame de Maintenon for relief; she was not willing to encourage his visits, yet had not power to refuse them: *the master*, says she, in a letter to madame de Coulanges, *comes every day to my apartment in spite of me*. He intreated her to reconcile madame de Montespan and mademoiselle de Fontanges to each other; madame de Maintenon refused at first to be concerned in these intrigues, but she yielded at length to the king's earnest solicitations, and thought it not impossible to procure good out of the evil itself. One day when the king was apprehensive that mademoiselle de Fontanges would flame out, he conjured madame de Maintenon to appease her, and to do it at any price: Accordingly madame de Maintenon went to the apartment of the favourite mistress, sustained the first sallies of her rage, promised her nothing, but lessened her pride by reproaching her with her crime, and awakened it again by shewing her the means of atoning for that crime. 'Alas! what must I do?' said mademoiselle de Fontanges to her. 'Renounce the king,' answered madame de Maintenon: 'either you love him, or you love him not; if you love him, you ought to suffer him to save his soul, and save your own likewise; if you do not love him, the efforts you make will not cost you much pain; however that may be, leave the king, and you will perform a noble and praise-worthy action.'

This sermon lasted two hours, but it was not the logick of the heart: mademoiselle de Fontanges, vexed at the unpleasing truths she heard, exclaimed impatiently, 'it is not as easy to quit a king as to change one's linen.'

The king no longer esteemed any woman but madame de Maintenon: it is so difficult for a sincere friend

friend to avoid the appearance of harshness with one who is passionately in love, that her frankness must certainly be accompanied with the most insinuating graces since Lewis was never disgusted with it. 'Whatever may be thought, whatever may be said, added madame de Maintenon, after relating this circumstance, 'I have never said any thing to the mistress of the king, which might not be affixed to the four corners of the world.'

Mademoiselle de Fontanges entirely effaced the marchioness de Montespan; she was the dispenser of all favours, the object of all the adoration; the ladies contended who should most please and imitate her. One day when she was at a hunting party with the king, the wind had discomposed her head dress, she tied it with a ribbon, the ends of which fell upon her forehead; the king was so pleased with this little singularity, that he intreated her not to alter it the whole day. The next day all the ladies appeared with their heads dressed in the new taste. From the court of France, this fashion went all over Europe with the name of mademoiselle de Fontanges. Madame de Maintenon gave her name also to some fashions. She was remarkable for dressing with an elegant simplicity, she never used red, seldom wore gold or silver, either for fear of attracting eyes, or because she looked more lovely when unadorned; her favourite colour was a half-filamot, which shewed to most advantage the lustre of her eyes, her manner of dressing her head always gave new graces to a face that wanted no charm but the first bloom of youth, she carried her attention to neatness and delicacy, as well as her modesty, to excess, even silk garters might be disadvantageous to the smoothest skin in the world, she used them so as to make them preserve her's: these are, without doubt, trifling cares, but she is not the most perfect woman, who differs most from the rest of her sex,

The king's heart was cruelly torn by the violence of his different passions, he gave himself up to Fontanges through frailty, he returned to Montespan through

through habit, and followed Maintenon through taste. All three were resolved to have him entirely : the first was beloved, the second still pleased sometimes, and the third was upon the point of pleasing more than both the others. Lewis had the capriciousness of love to endure, the insolent rage of jealousy to appease, the austerities of devotion to submit to : the queen's uneasiness he could only guess at, but he suffered from that gentleness of disposition which obliged her to confine it within her own breast : but what most tormented him, was, the silent upbraidings of his own conscience, which he had been sensible of, ever since he had discovered that he could not be a libertine and a christian at the same time.

Madame de Maintenon played her part with most address, it might be said that she had no interest in these cabals ; she was continually representing to the lover the necessity he was under of breaking his chains ; to the mistresses she endeavoured to shew the advantages of being at peace with each other. She at length consoled the king, and reconciled the rivals, and so successfully established her system, that at a ball given at Villers-cottrets, Fontanges appeared adorned by the hands of Montespan.

The marchioness did not long observe the conditions of this seeming peace, her rage and her despair broke out with new violence, she exclaimed against mademoiselle de Fontanges, against Adrets her confidant, against mademoiselle l'Étrange, who sided with each party, and was detested by both, against the prince de Marillac, and the whole court. The king, to whom this excess of fury gave great uneasiness, fled from his first mistress, to escape the ascendant she had over him ; staid only a few moments with his new one, who had not wit enough to amuse him, and passed whole hours with madame de Maintenon, whose engaging softness became every day more necessary to his tormented soul.

Mademoiselle de Fontanges grew pregnant, the king created her a dutchess, but she did not enjoy her elevation long ; she perceived that the king's passion was

was decreasing, the highest honours, the most lavish gifts could not console her for an afternoon given to madame de Maintenon. The king loaded her with presents, she now wished for nothing but his heart, he gave the abbey of Chelles to one of her sisters; at the consecration of this abbess, the hangings of the crown, the jewels, the musick, the perfumes, the great number of bishops that officiated, filled a country woman who was present at the ceremony, with such astonishment, that she cried aloud, 'Sure this is paradise! No! madame, said a person who was near, there would not be so many bishops there.'

Madame de Fontanges contracted an illness in her lying in: a report universally prevailed that she had been poisoned by madame de Montespan, as if accidents in such cases were very unusual. The wife believed that Fontanges herself had spread that report, that she might be allowed guards; for during her sickness, and even in the bosom of death, she was charmed with grandeur and magnificence. The king's indifference sensibly wounded her, she despised a settled revenue of forty thousand crowns, and languished for health and the heart of the king, which she no longer possessed. She fell into a languishing decay that defaced her charms: the prior of Cabrieres undertook to restore her to health, but his remedies increased her disorder: another kind of quack treated her soul with no better success.

She retired from court, and told the king that she ought no longer to think of any thing but death. She entered a convent in the fauxbourg St. Jacques, whither the king sent the duke de la Feuillade three times a week to bring him an account of her health, he did not even send a gentleman of his chamber to monsieur de Catinat.

The marchioness de Montespan became more jealous than ever of madame de Maintenon. 'I knew, said she, that I should triumph over that stupid beauty; but against the charms of wit, the pleasures of an easy and engaging conversation, I am not able to contend.'

Madame de Fontanges perceiving her last moments to draw near, desired to see the king. Lewis was apprehensive that he should be melted into a tenderness that would take off her attention from higher concerns, and through some remains of love denied her that last proof of it. The confessor, less scrupulous, assured him that she would die in peace after this last interview : the zealots were enraged at such an instance of base compliance in a man charged with celestial vengeance ; however the king consented to visit once more his dying mistress. On the day that she expected him, she asked every moment whether he was come ; at length the king arrived ; he beheld her whom he had loved so passionately, pale, emaciated, her charming face so altered, that he hardly knew her : she intreated him to pay her debts, and to marry her sister * advantageously : the king promised to do both, their last farewell was very tender and moving. ' I die contented, said she, since my last looks have seen the tears of my king.'

She expired in these sentiments of passion, mixed with the sorrows of repentance and the confidence of faith, which God grants us at the hour of death, to prepare us for a better life, and which he sometimes suggests to grant sinners, to open their eyes, that they may behold the precipice they were hurrying into. The reign of this favourite was like the reign of roses, as splendid and as short.

Madame de Montespan expressed great joy at her rival's death. Lewis, enraged at her insolent exultation, reproached her with her baseness and ingratitude, in sharing so little in his affliction, after having so largely shared in his pleasures : his imagination was continually filled with the idea of his mistress, her beauties, effaced by the hand of death, nourishing perhaps a criminal hope in the midst of the most solemn protestations of repentance, offering to God a heart still beating with guilty passion, and torn with too late

* Her sister was soon after married to monsieur de Molac.

late remorse, miserable, perhaps for ever, and miserable through him. Struck with this horrid reflection, he had recourse to madame de Maintenon to dissipate it. 'You only, said he to her, are able to console me, I am never happy but when I am with you.' He still found her firm, but always tender and compassionate.

CHAPTER II.

The duke du Maine made prince of Dombes.

1681.] **T**HE princess de Montpensier, grown old amidst the intrigues of the court, still consumed in ardent desires for Lauzun, her passion was obstinate, because it was lawful, or perhaps because it was meanly placed, and had met with opposition. She still flattered herself that she should be able to procure the count's liberty, and ten years fruitless solicitations had only animated her hopes. The king's resentment increased with time, which weakened that of madame de Montespan. The princess used her utmost endeavours to conciliate the friendship of madame de Maintenon, conjured her to have pity on her misfortunes, and promised her all she required, provided her lover was released. Madame de Maintenon, instead of using these offers to her own advantage, resolved that the duke du Maine should be the better for them. The king and the marchioness de Montespan engaged in the scheme, and the princess de Montpensier found the mistress every day more concerned for the misfortunes of Lauzun, and the monarch more disposed to favour her with those pleasing distinctions, those particular regards, without which, in a court princesses have rank, but no influence. 'Consider, said the marchioness to her often, whether you cannot do something to soften the king.' She used to send her children to the princess, they were pretty, their innocent prattle diverted her: the duke du Maine was extremely handsome, and had a great deal of wit, the princess was charmed with his insinuating;

ating behaviour, she was grieved to see him lame: this sentiment of pity operated powerfully upon her heart, and madame de Maintenon assisted it by suggesting to her little pupil a thousand engaging arts to win the affections of the princess, and prepare the way for the adoption they had projected.

Lauzun still employed her thoughts, his enlargement was the end of all her wishes, whenever she proposed any method for moving the king in his favour, madame de Maintenon, who was attentive to all her words and actions, led her eyes towards the duke du Maine, and taught her to look upon the child with tenderness and with hope. If madame de Montespan gained a jewel in a lottery; the duke du Maine always carried it to the princess de Montpensier, who fell into the snares that were laid for her credulity and gratitude, and beginning to entertain an extreme tenderness for a child, who every morning wrote her the prettiest billets imaginable, she returned his disssembled fondness with a truly parental affection.

These artifices succeeded so well, that the princess at length resolved to make the little duke her heir, provided the count de Lauzun was released from his confinement, and that the king would consent to a marriage which he had at first approved, and afterwards forbid. She employed madame de Maintenon to carry these proposals to the marchioness de Montespan, who received them with transport, but insisted upon having them from the mouth of the princess herself.

The granddaughter of Henry IVth, destined as it should seem, to prove, that nothing is so abject as the submissions of the Great, went to the apartment of the mistress, beseeched her to accept of the greatest estate in France, thanked her for the praises she bestowed upon her constant affection for Lauzun, and entered into an absolute engagement with a person who bound herself to no conditions in return.

The next day madame de Montespan told the deluded princess that the king was greatly circumscribed by the letters he had sent to the ambassadors after his
rupture

rupture with Lauzun, but that to move him effectually, it was necessary she should solicit him herself. The princess de Montpensier, instead of behaving in this interview like a woman, whose high birth, and immense estates, put her in a condition to make a treaty, spoke like a suppliant, and Lewis answered like a sovereign.

Her eyes were now opened, she found that madame de Montespan would be from henceforward mistress of her dutchies, and might make what conditions she pleased. In her vexation at being thus imposed upon, she wrote to the duke of Lorraine, her kinsman, and assured him she would make him her heir. That prince sent monsieur le Bec to her, earnestly recommending it to him, to manage the affair with the greatest secrecy, on account of the spies, which in a manner blocked up the palace of Luxembourg. The agent entered Paris covered with rags, lodged in a garret, and having learned that the princess de Montpensier went very often to hear mass in a neighbouring church, he took his stand near the place where the holy water was kept, and asked alms of the princess as she passed by. The princess observing him to close his prayer book with a mysterious air, was surprized at that motion, and desirous to know the meaning of it. The next day the beggar opened his book, just as she passed, and she read these words, *Sent by the duke of Lorraine:* and the following day she read, as before, the direction to his lodgings.

The princess, who had a romantick turn, was delighted with this adventure; she regulated the time and manner of an interview in a billet which she gave him between two crown pieces, but her misfortune had not yet taught her caution and reserve. She confided her secret to one domestick only, and that domestick was treacherous: at the very moment when monsieur le Bec was preparing to go to the rendezvous, he was, by an order from the lieutenant de Police, dragged out of his garret, and sent to lie at Bicêtre. The next day he was brought before the marquis de Louvois, whom he pretended not to know, and asked alms of him.

him. The minister ordered him to leave Paris immediately, and treated as a vagabond this private agent, who was afterwards minister plenipotentiary at the congress of Cambray, where he related all these circumstances to the marchioness d'H . . . from whom I had them.

The princess de Montpensier not seeing the beggar any more, was apprehensive that her letter had been intercepted, and that this snare had been laid for her to discover her real intentions. She endeavoured to renew her treaty with the marchioness de Montespan, who would not deign to take any notice of her proposals. Madame de Maintenon was again sent to the princess, who looking upon her as the cause, or an accomplice in the design that was laid against her, said to her, as soon as she appeared, *I have not a long time done you the honour to speak to you, because——* madame de Maintenon, surprized at so rude a beginning, instantly left the room. The princess ran after her, obliged her to stay, and yielding to necessity, told her in a softer accent, that she was ready to divest herself of all her estates, provided she would be permitted to marry the count de Lauzun. Madame de Maintenon represented to her that the king, to whom she had made those offers without conditions, would be astonished at her presuming to prescribe any now, and that she would do better to throw herself entirely upon his gratitude and generosity. The princess replied that she well knew what might be expected from the generosity practised in courts, and that if she was not permitted to marry the count, she would dispose of her patrimony as she pleased: to this madame de Maintenon answered, that she had promised it to the king, and that his majesty would never permit her to dispose of it otherwise. The princess burst into tears, complained that she was cruelly treated, and said she would give all she possessed to the poor, and it would then be seen whether the king would force from the hospitals what was lawfully bestowed upon them. 'If you resolve to do that,' replied madame de Maintenon, 'I am not sure

sure but that Lauzun will be transferred to the Bastile.

The distressed princess, terrified at this threat, threw herself entirely upon the king's goodness, and made to the duke du Maine, a donation of the sovereignty of Dombes, and of the earldom of Eu: after which, madame de Maintenon had orders to tell her, that the count de Lauzun should be released, that she was permitted to marry him, and to settle an estate upon him, of forty thousand livres a year. Madame de Maintenon now assured her, that it should be the chief study of her whole life to serve her, in acknowledgment for the obligations, the prince, whom she had brought up, and loved with the fondest affection, had received from her: she said so many other tender, grateful, and obliging things to her, that this princess, whose whole soul was open to the soothing of friendship, was in raptures at having suffered herself to be thus stripped of all her possessions: a few kind words from the king almost turned her head, and the enlargement of Lauzun completed her intoxication.

But the man for whom she had sacrificed all, dispelled the illusion, and left her sensible only to grief, for having exposed herself to the public contempt, for the most contemptible man in the world: Lauzun now only saw in the princess de Montpensier, a woman violent in her temper, imprudent, jealous, burning with impure fires, at an age when the most lawful flames are extinguished; and in Lauzun the princess found nothing but folly, treachery, ingratitude and falshood. So many obligations repaid with insults and hate, could no more cure the princess of her passion, than ten years imprisonment could cure Lauzun of his faults.

The marchioness de Montespan had been long disgusted with her name, and had resolved to change it; the ridiculous name of Montesper, she said, brought her ill luck, and flattered herself, that if she took another, she should also alter her fortune. She saw that the name of Maintenon had succeeded but too well, and that

that of Montepan was now detested by her ; because her husband, by his continual state of drunkenness, had connected with it the idea of a sot, and she, by her criminal passion for the king, had sunk it into contempt and detestation.

The title of Montpensier sounded pleasing in her ears, and tempted her vanity. She began to treat Lauzun with a distinction that surprized the whole court, where this prisoner was almost forgot, and where he was not yet permitted to appear. She supported him against Louvois, who through some remains of jealousy, or of hatred, amused the king with stories of the imprudence and ridiculous follies of a man, whose pride he had formerly dreaded. The marchioness declared so openly for Lauzun, that Louvois was apprehensive he would be recalled to court ; but madame de Montepan acted thus with interested views ; she had promised Lauzun, to restore him to the king's favour, that she might use to her own advantage, the influence he still had over the princess his wife, whom she hoped would be prevailed upon to make over the remainder of her estates to her, in consideration of a large pension ; and also to permit her to take the name of Montpensier, which should afterwards descend to her son, the count de Toulouse *. The princess had been too ill requited for her former concessions, to be tempted to make new ones : she rejected the proposals in such a manner, as left the marchioness no room

* The count de Toulouse, was just then legitimated : Lewis IV. had consented, with some reluctance, to those publick acts, which contained a confession of his guilty passions. Henry IV. was not so delicate ; the letters patents that legitimate the duke de Vendôme run thus : ‘ Having observed the great perfections and graces, as well of body as mind, in the person of our well-beloved Gabriella d’Estrees, I have chosen her from among all my subjects, as the most worthy of my friendship.’

room to hope she would ever be prevailed upon to consent to them; and Lauzun was thrown back into his former insignificancy.

The princess suffered for this fall: Lauzun reproached her with being the cause of all his misfortunes, and treated her with such insolent tyranny, that it is reported he one day said to her, at his return from the chace, *Henrietta of Bourbon, pull off my Boots*; and that the princess resenting this insolence, in very high terms, he made a motion with his foot, expressive of the highest outrage, and left her. The next day, accustomed without doubt to scenes of this kind, he came back to the palace of Luxembourg; but the wife of Lauzun, having at length recollected, that she had once been very near being the wife of an emperor, assumed the air and accent of a princess. 'I command you,' said she, 'never to appear before me again.' Lauzun answered her only with a profound bow †.

The princess de Montpensier, after having passed the first part of her life in the intrigues of state, and the pleasures of a court; the middle of it in amours and affliction, passed the end in devotion and obscurity. She fell so low, and madame de Maintenon was raised so high, that the latter, in her turn, did the princess the honour to speak to her sometimes. Princesses ought to learn from this example, that it being impossible to avoid the inconveniencies annexed to their rank, without being entangled in passions that subject them to contempt, they ought to resolve to be miserable with a good grace.

It has been confidently said, that Lewis XIV. never forgot that this princess had caused the cannon of the Bastille to be fired upon him. One day, when he was recounting to an ambassador, the troubles of his minority, and had proceeded as far as the siege of Paris, the princess de Montpensier entered: 'There is my cousin,' said the king, interrupting his recital, 'who will give you the rest of my history.'

The marquis de Louvois endeavoured to keep up his

† Memoirs of the marquis de Dangeau.

his resentments against all that party. He procured the prince of Condé to be removed from the command of the army, by reminding the king in a critical moment of his former faults. The king had already pardoned them, but they had left unfavourable traces in his mind: at a campaign in Flanders, he could not help saying to him with some emotion, 'But for you, all this country had been mine. Ah! Sire, replied the prince, you have promised me never more to mention this.'

CHAPTER III.

Of the Converts to the Roman Church.

WHILE madame de Maintenon made use of her favour with the king to introduce virtue and piety into the court, the dutchess of Portsmouth acted very differently in England; and made Saint James's the abode of luxury and pleasures: she had long governed Charles II. by the force of her wit and beauty; no one was more capable of pleasing, when she condescended to endeavour to please; she was in the highest favour, and had the most extensive influence, yet all seemed below her aspiring mind. The dutchess of Portsmouth, was probably the only woman who supported adversity with fortitude, after having enjoyed prosperity with insolence. Her connexions with France, gave madame de Maintenon an opportunity to enter into a correspondence with her.

The catholick religion was the subject of their letters. The dutchess of Portsmouth was employed to protect it in England, and Versailles taught her the means. She thought the crimes of a scandalous life might be expiated by her zeal, to make proselytes to the roman church; the dutchess of York was infatuated with the same zeal, and these three ladies introduced into the court of London, that rage for making converts, which under the following reign no longer knew any bounds, and was the cause of all the troubles in the state. At London the depravation of manners

ners was at its height, libertinism was the fashion, and to spread it was the business of the Great, and those who ruined most souls by wicked practices, were the very persons who were most solicitous to save them by tenets.

The same spirit prevailed in the court of France; but vice there wrapt itself in shade, and zeal ostentatiously displayed itself. The protestants were hated by Charles II. because they opposed the despotick power of the Steuarts, and by Lewis XIV. because they were enemies to the catholick religion: one would revenge his father, the other would revenge the church. Madame de Maintenon, who knew the king's aversion to hereticks, undertook to convert all her relations, and began with the marquis de Villette, the son of that aunt who had taken care of her in her infancy. Monsieur Bossuet, who made all the anti-chambers in the court resound with the noise of controversy, in vain disputed in his presence; the marquis de Villette was often perplexed, but was never convinced: when the divine entered into deep arguments, and drew certain inferences from them, the heretick would tell him, that such wonderful eloquence only amazed, and confounded an unlettered sailor like him, that truth only furnished simple truths, and that he could never be brought to believe a religion, which he was not able to understand. Bourdouloué was not more persuasive, monsieur de Villette, always pleaded his ignorance. At length the king sent him an order to be converted; the marquis demanded time; he was told it should be granted; madame de Maintenon pressed him to fix a certain space of time for being instructed in the great truths of the catholick religion. 'I shall at least take a hundred years, replied the marquis, ten to persuade me that infallibility is lodged in a society of men, twenty to accustom myself to the mystery of transubstantiation; and so on to all the rest.' His cousin had not foreseen or expected so resolute an answer; she therefore took measures with the minister to order the marquis de Villette upon a long voyage at sea, that if the father should perish, the children at least might be saved.

The

The marquis de Villette had two sons, and one daughter; the sons although very young, had served in several campaigns. The eldest was but nine years old, when he was in the naval battle of Messire, where Ruyter was slain. The child was wounded, and they made him a lieutenant of the ship; he had such fortitude and presence of mind, that when he beheld the blood streaming from his wound, he said calmly, 'if my mother saw this, what would she say?'

After the departure of monsieur Villette, whom all the alluring offers of madame de Maintenon could not fix at court, she demanded mademoiselle de Murçay of her parents: they refused to send her upon several pretences, which madame de Maintenon paid no regard to, and demanded her again; but meeting with another refusal from the father, she caused the child to be taken away privately with the mother's consent. The poor girl wept excessively, when madame de Maintenon declared to her, that she must be a protestant. These tears recalled to her remembrance, the violence that had been used to her in her infancy, to make her abjure a religion, which she afterwards voluntarily quitted, and this remembrance moderated her zeal. Mademoiselle de Murçay was at length gained by gentle methods, and thought the king's mass so fine, that she promised to be a catholic, provided she might attend every day at the king's mass. She afterwards became a jansenist, and madame de Maintenon could no more pardon this second heresy, than allow her to remain in her first.

Monsieur de Chateau-Renaud, who had with him the eldest son of the marquis de Villette, received orders to send him to court; the youth was full of fire and ambition; they made him comprehend, that heresy would be an obstacle to the great fortune to which he was destined, and he instantly abjured it. His brother was more obstinate, because he was younger, and the same powerful arguments were not so well understood by him; however, after much preaching from the indefatigable Gobelin, he at last yielded. Nothing was at that time more easy and more artificial than conversions.

versions. The designed profelyte was told at first, that the two religions did not differ so much from one another, as the divines of each pretended: they read to him Bossuet's *exposition of the catholick faith*, which so artfully united them: the huguenot was assured, that he was already almost a catholick; but as soon as he had abjured, he was found to be still a huguenot; he was required to submit to all the acts of a worship, wherein he found those innumerable trifling tenets, which during his conversion they had suppressed.

It will doubtless be thought very surprizing, that madame de Maintenon should have been so ardently solicitous to make converts; her own earnestness in her religion, led her to it; and the king's well known zeal strengthened that motive; zeal set aside paternal authority, when salvation was in question, for men belonged to God before they were subjected to their parents: It is no wonder then that it so eagerly endeavoured to convert children, when the council of our kings had just pronounced that an infant of seven years of age was capable of doing what Henry IV. thought so difficult, namely, to chuse a religion, and to decide between the churches of Geneva and Rome.

The marquis de Villette made bitter complaints of madame de Maintenon at his return, and upbraided her with the obligations she owed his mother, which she had so ungratefully repaid, by using violence to the consciences of her children. His resentment wore off by degrees; and after having held out against the eloquence of the bishop of Meaux, the promises of the king, and the importunities of madame de Maintenon, he went to sea a second time, and made reflexions hitherto unknown to him. The parable of the tares and good grain, appeared to him to carry clear conviction against the schism of the protestants, and he was persuaded that it was impossible for mere human means to separate them.

He

He was now fully convinced of the truth of the catholic religion, but being apprehensive that he should be accused of having put his conscience to sale, he abjured his errors privately in the presence of the curate of his own parish. As soon as he returned to court, the king, who had often said, that the marquis de Villette had no fault but that of being an heretic, loaded him with benefits, and assured him that he looked upon his returning to the bosom of the church as a real service done to him. 'Sire, replied the marquis de Villette, it is the only thing that I have ever yet done, from any other motive than that of pleasing you.'

Notwithstanding this extreme disinterestedness, he endeavoured to raise his fortune by this change of religion; from a proselyte he became a converter: perhaps he was desirous of extending that faith which he believed to be the only true one, or perhaps he endeavoured to stifle the remorse of his own conscience, by corrupting the consciences of his friends, or hoped to avoid the wrath of God and the censures of men, by sheltering himself among a croud of criminals like himself, or perhaps, and this is the most probable conjecture, he found it easier to prove the sincerity of his own conversion by his zeal to convert others, than by practising the great duties of religion. Madame de Maintenon suspected her cousin of being governed by the basest of these motives, and intreated him to make fewer catholics, and to be a better one himself. The hypocrisy of those persons who were reunited to the church filled her with horror. 'It is infamous, said she, to abjure without conviction.' But why did she not always remember this maxim, which opposed those harsh methods, that propagated the infamy, and seldom afforded conviction?

The family of Saint-Hermine still persisted in the profession of the protestant faith. Madame de Maintenon, who was absolutely resolved that all who belonged to her, should be catholic, sent for Mesdemoiselles de Saint-Hermine to court, and undertook to convert them

them herself. She dwelt much upon controversial matters, for she was not ignorant of any of the arguments that could be urged by the protestants in defence of their sect. The young ladies abjured, after having made a noble resistance. This appellation was always given to an obstinacy in supporting what they were not convinced of, even after they were converted, or had resolved to appear so, and not to yield till they had run through the whole field of controversy, and objected to every article of the new faith that was proposed to them. This artifice procured great praise to the converter, and saved the proselyte from all suspicion of interestedness.

However many of the d'Aubigné's were rebels, and abandoned their country to preserve their religion. I have seen a daughter of that family at Copenhagen in a situation greatly below her birth; she complained of the furious zeal of madame de Maintenon, yet always spoke of her with great respect.

The ardor madame de Maintenon discovered to make proselytes, drew general hatred upon her: she consoled herself for it by the hope of pleasing God, and the certainty of pleasing the king, whose esteem for her augmented the love with which she had inspired him, and respect for her virtue grew with that love. She was never to be seen but in the ante-chambers conversing with Bossuet and Pellison upon religious matters, or in the churches leading to some huguenots to the altar. It was esteemed an honour to be converted by her. Those who could not be convinced by the arguments of the divines, or resisted the offers of the corrupters, yielded to the soft persuasions of this amiable apostle: and this quality, although a little abject, was a wonderful charm in the eyes of a prince so extremely religious as Lewis XIV. who had himself a great desire to be converted, not from one faith to another, but from a vicious life to a life of virtue and piety.

CHAPTER IV.

The conduct of Madame de Maintenon towards the Marchioness de Montespan.

THE king to be converted thoroughly must necessarily comply with these two articles ; he must quit the evil, and endeavour to repair it. The first was already performed, during the last four years, he had neither solicited any favours from madame de Montespan, or expressed any passion for her. He had some little gallantries, but those he was ashamed of, for he still loved pleasures, but the charm was broke. The second appeared to madame de Maintenon the most difficult to be effected. There was a necessity for re-uniting a husband and wife, whose characters were directly opposite, to vanquish the timidity of the king, whose conscience reproached him for the cruel indifference he had so long shewn the queen, and to subdue the scruples of that princess who had been accustomed to consider as a virtue the continence which she had long practised through necessity, and to bring under subjection two confessors, of whom one was accused of compromising too much with the passions, and the other convicted of superstitiously enslaving them.

Madame de Maintenon took advantage of the king's fondness for conversing with her, to carry on her scheme. Without tiring him with incessant exhortations and reproofs, she brought him to such a dependance upon her, as never to resolve on any thing without consulting her ; and this she effected, either with shewing him, by the wisdom of her advice, the errors in that he used to receive from madame de Montespan, by making him envy the calm pleasures of an innocent life, and the peace of a conscience void of guilt, or by receiving his visits with the perplexity and uneasiness of a woman who knew that the publick never examines till it has past sentence.

The king generally spent two hours every afternoon in the apartment of madame de Maintenon, talking

talking to her with that easy freedom, that air of friendship, and settled confidence, which rendered this place more agreeable to him than any other.*

‘Is it possible, said the courtier, that a man can be so fond of the conversation of any woman with whom he is not in love?’ The ladies could not conceive how one of their sex could be the favourite of a king without sacrificing her virtue. Madame de Montespan was tortured with envy and vexation. It was not thought necessary to banish her from court, the king saw her every day with increasing coldness; madame de Maintenon, it will be said, was then sure of her own influence, and of the king’s indifference for her rival; but this was not the case, she still doubted of his cure, but observing that his passion was more likely to be weakened by satiety than absence, she thought the continual presence of the marchioness de Montespan would compleat his cure. In effect, the king by having his mistress always before his eyes, passed from hatred of the sin to contempt for her who had been the cause of his committing it; and madame de Montespan, still so beautiful, had no longer any charms in the eyes of a prince who had eight children by her, and deeply repented it.

The marchioness made one more effort to recal his love. The king shewed to madame de Maintenon a letter which he had received from his mistress, filled with all the ardour of a beginning passion, and commanded her to tell that *unhappy woman*, (that was his expression,) that he did not desire to be any longer loved by her, and that he earnestly recommended to her the same indifference for him. Madame de Maintenon executed this commission with an eagerness, which proved that she was as secure of her reputation as of her virtue; for if she had been guilty, or suspected of being the rival of madame de Montespan,

* Sevigné’s letters. Madame de Maintenon, says she, is in possession of a place, that no one ever yet held, or ever will again.

she durst not have reproved another for a passion she allowed in herself.

This sentence was a stroke of thunder to the unhappy marchioness de Montespan ; sometimes she exclaimed against her who pronounced it ; sometimes she endeavoured to gain her by excuses, tears and promises. ‘ There is but one promise that I require you to make, said madame de Maintenon to her, but it is to God, to the king, and to your own honour, that you owe it : promise faithfully to renounce your passion.’ ‘ Ah ! replied madame de Montespan, I can more easily tear my heart from my breast.’

Madame de Maintenon when she left the marchioness, met one of the courtiers in her way to her own apartment, who said to her, ‘ there is a report that the king is resolved to forsake women, and that you, madam, have inspired him with this resolution.’ ‘ Would to God it may be so, although I were to die this instant ; she replied, with the fortitude of a woman, who in the midst of a licentious court dared to practise and to recommend virtue.’

The king was in doubt whether he ought not to banish the marchioness de Montespan ; madame de Maintenon through compassion spared her this last blow, but caused her to be beset by priests who were instructed to exhort her to banish herself. They could not prevail, the court was become necessary to her, ever since she had been no longer necessary to the court. The king still suffered her to preserve the appearance of the highest favour ; the courtiers must have an idol to worship, and madame de Maintenon would not be that idol.

However all solicitations were made to madame de Maintenon, she was the dispenser of all favours ; madame de Montespan, still fond of the appearances of power, had recourse to her whenever a habit of asking, or the vanity of shewing that she could still obtain what she asked, induced her to provide for her dependants. Madame de Maintenon was never able to hate or deny her : and the marchioness de Montespan now reigned by the woman, who during ten years had been subjected to her.

Father

Father de la Chaſſe who had not been able to purſue the motions of the king's heart, becauſe he did not yet poſſeſs his entire confidence, was afraid that he ſtill heſitated between madame de Montespan and virtue : and the aſcendant the miſtreſs had ſtill over him, ſeemed to inſinuate, that virtue would be obliged to yield. He therefore gave orders to the jeſuit who preached before the king, to make the danger of re-lapſing into ſin the ſubject of his ſermon. This had the deſired ſucceſs. Lewis, to prevent his falling again, was deſirous of being ſtrengthened with the ſacred bread. Father de la Chaſſe, feigned indispoſition that he might not be obliged to take his confeſſion, but he would certainly have done better to have confeſſed, and afterwards reſuſed to abſolve him. The king wrote to him with his own hand, deſired him to return to court, and aſſured him that he would be ſatiſfied with his behaviour. What paſſed between the confeſſor and his penitent is a ſecret, but it is certain that the king no longer continued to viſit the marchioneſs in private, tho' ſhe ſtill held her place at court.

The devotees, and even the leaſt prejudiced perſons of the court, murmured at her being ſtill ſo powerful in a place where ſhe had ſo long lived with infamy : Is it poſſible, they cried, that we can be perſuaded this commerce is broke off, while we ſee the lovers every day together ? before the reign of Francis the firſt, our kings by keeping their amours ſecret, ſeemed tacitly to condemn them : their people were neither the victim of their guilty paſſions, nor the witneſs of their dotage : they durſt not venture to exact the homage of their courtiers even to a miſtreſs the moſt ardently beloved, and now, the court is obliged to adore a miſtreſs, who is no longer beloved : to love madame de Montespan, and to give power, was certainly a great weakneſs ; but when cured of that paſſion, to continue her influence ſtill, is criminal in the higheſt degree, it is to make the effect ſurvive the cauſe, and to honour vice is to oppreſs virtue.

The abbé Gobelin repeated theſe murmurs to ma-

dame de Maintenon, she thought them but too well founded, yet durst not mention them to the king, who could yet bear only half truths to be told him. It was dangerous to attempt leading a man through thorny ways, whose head still ran upon the rosy paths of love. Lewis had quitted madame de Montespan in consequence of his growing affection for madame de Maintenon : his conscience was at rest, it reproached him with no crime, but it was not yet delicate enough to hear what his people had to charge him with. He loved the devotee, but he hated the rigid suggestions of devotion, and would have thought the proposal of a public affront to the mother of his children an excess of folly and enthusiasm. It was necessary therefore to make him virtuous, before he could be made a christian.

CHAPTER V.

Madame de Maintenon's conduct towards the queen.

THE court set out for Chambor, but madame de Montespan was not permitted to make this journey : the queen found happiness at Chambor, which she little expected ; in the excess of her gratitude she bestowed as many marks of distinction upon madame de Maintenon as she received instances of respect from the king : she flattered herself that she should still please, such tenderness, such extreme attention was blended with this respect. ‘ God has restored to me,’ said she, the heart which madame de Montespan robbed me of, and so long withheld from me’.

This was the surest method madame de Maintenon could have taken to secure and extend her influence. The queen thanked her for directing a tenderness to her, which she might have ingrossed to herself. The ladies admired a conduct which they could not comprehend : even the courtiers who had least virtue, were pleased to find their king become virtuous, either through a fondness for change, or that being satiated with

with vice, virtue had now allurements for the most vicious. No favourite had ever acted like madame de Maintenon, no one was ever honoured like her. She saw the monarch subjected to her will, the queen depending upon her friendship, the ministers paying court in her antichamber, and all this was so far from intoxicating her with pride, that she was confused, perplexed and uneasy at it. She raised herself to the highest fortune, by candidly acknowledging that a moderate one was above her; even the princes of the blood submitted without reluctance to the influence of a woman, who was too modest or too timid to abuse it. Louvois alone was jealous of her.

The dauphiness did not go to Chambor, so that the favour madame de Maintenon possessed, appeared evidently independent of the king's friendship for that princess. The queen on her own saint's day gave madame de Maintenon her picture adorned with diamonds, a distinction which she set the highest value upon. The marchioness de Montespan had never been so much honoured, she pretended to the same favour, but she was made to understand that presents of that kind were marks of esteem.

Mean time the king's frequent conversations with madame de Maintenon filled the court with surprise, and the city with scandal. Monsieur Chamarante conducted her to and from the king's apartment openly. No one seemed able to comprehend this new kind of favour; friendship never suggested such extreme tenderness, such anxious solicitude as the king expressed for madame de Maintenon: she had opened a new world to Lewis, she inspired him with sentiments he had till then been unacquainted with, he now enjoyed the pleasures of a tender and solid friendship, without constraint, without passion and without guilt.

Madame de Maintenon often interrupted the king in a discourse, perhaps too obliging for her, with reflexions on what the queen had suffered, and earnestly exhorted him to reward her patient virtue, with the tenderness she had so well deserved. The king subdued by advice so disinterested, and so frequently urged, would

to please her, quit her immediately, and visit the queen, whom he addressed with the same softness he would have done madame de Maintenon, whose image still dwelt upon his mind ; but when the illusion was gone he relapsed into his former indifference. However he now began to have a taste for domestic happiness; he was of an age when the passions begin to subside, and the heart seeks for an object of esteem rather than love. He looked upon the queen without disgust, tho' devotion had almost doubled her years, but in madame de Maintenon he always found charms that excited the most tender sentiments ; he grew every day more faithful to the queen, and every day violated that fidelity, by giving her his person without his heart.

The queen, by twenty years of coldness and indifference made a stranger to these soft endearments, was charmed, yet confused, and knew no longer how to answer them. The king having one day desired to see her, she hesitated whether she should keep her appointment with him. Madame de Maintenon who had contrived it, attended her, and vanquished her reluctance : for such was the natural reserve of this princess, or such the awe that the king's presence inspired her with, that she trembled and was in the utmost embarrassment while the interview lasted : by degrees she subdued her scruples and her terrors, and a union so earnestly desired was at length complete. One of her ladies having attempted to give her suspicions unfavourable to madame de Maintenon, ' Why should I be jealous,' said she, to the malicious incendiary, when I never found so much tenderness in the king before ?'

The dutchess of Richelieu was a witness of this uncommon favour of madame de Maintenon ; she saw virtue triumphant, and lamented that she had abandoned it ; envy and emulation stifled all remains of friendship : she alledged, that she only had a right to reconcile the husband and wife, to whose long separation she had so largely contributed, and as impatient to do good as she had been eager to do evil, now the former was more advantageous to her interest, she said she had always acted the part of a mediatrix ; that she would do so still ;

still ; and if the king was desirous of reforming, she would assist and confirm him in that design better than any other ; she sowed seeds of division between the queen and the dauphiness, and laid all the blame upon madame de Maintenon.

A similarity of fortune, an equal attachment to religion, could not unite these two princesses. They were both devotees, both were neglected by their husbands, and both unhappy. Yet they could not love each other ; they were very seldom together, and even sometimes transgressed the known rules of decorum, as far as two women of that rank could transgress them. Instead of attributing their mutual disgust to the contrariety of their temper, which was still stronger than the sympathy in their fates, they suspected madame de Maintenon of being the occasion of it, to whom the court was obliged for all the union that was in it.

Madame de Maintenon, whose sole endeavour was to introduce peace where discord had reigned before, was greatly afflicted at a suspicion so injurious to her, and reflected, with as much astonishment, upon the malignity of the world, as if she had but just begun to know it. She was soon justified in the queen's opinion, but the dauphiness refused to hear what she had to say in her defence ; jealous herself of the favour her dame d'Autour enjoyed, she did not chuse to be undeceived, because she was resolved not to love her. Madame de Richelieu represented her to the dauphiness as the most artful woman in the world, who used her power of persuasion to the worst purposes, and conjured her to avoid coming to any explanation with her. The princess, already too fond of solitude, sought it now more than ever. The king sent for madame de Maintenon every day, and, to console her for the uneasiness she suffered, went also every day to visit her.

She was too much affected with the injury done to her character, to be made happy by this new honour ; she told the king that she was not able to support the unjust frowns of the dauphiness, or to serve a mistress who considered her as her enemy ; that she had always been solicitous to conciliate friendship, not to

create enmity ; that since she was so unfortunate as to be the occasion of discord in the court, she thought it her duty to retire, and that there was nothing so dear which she would not sacrifice to peace.

The king was persuaded that nothing more was necessary to remove this misunderstanding, than to oblige the queen and the dauphiness to explain themselves. These two princesses had a long conversation with madame de Maintenon in the king's presence, the result of which was that the dutchess of Richelieu was an incendiary, and madame de Maintenon absolutely innocent. They both expressed great regret for having suspected her, the dauphiness carried her back with her to her own apartment, intreated her to forget what had passed, and the queen ever after governed herself wholly by her advice.

To be justified at the expence of the dutchess de Richelieu, was a new source of affliction to madame de Maintenon. She had but one friend in the court, and that friend betrayed her. Had she suffered this injury from madame de Montespan, she would have borne it with less regret ; but from the dutchess de Richelieu, to whom she owed all, whom she was desirous of being always grateful to ! it was her destiny then not to be able to love or esteem her benefactresses. These reflections, tho' just and reasonable, were as fatal to her temper as to her happiness ; she became distrustful, and that fault increased with age. Every day a witness of a thousand acts of perfidiousness, she suspected every one she conversed with ; she was afraid of being always surrounded with false friends, and behaved to those who really loved her, not as if she was one day to hate them, but as if she expected they would one day hate her. Hence that taste of monastic retirement, which succeeded her love for liberty ; hence that extreme caution in all she wrote ; that aversion for engaging in affairs, for fear of being duped by artifice and falshood ; hence that perpetual combat between her natural frankness and a reserve suggested by her sufferings ; and hence her favourite
maxim,

maxim, unfortunately, but too true ; *One is every day deceived by friendships of thirty years duration.*

The king was extremely enraged against the dutchess de Richelieu, and would have dismissed her from court, if madame de Maintenon had not altered his resolution, by saying, ‘ you may possibly give her post to one who will behave worse; the malice one knows, is less dangerous than that one knows not.’

CHAPTER VI.

& the

The death of the queen.

MADAME de Maintenon accompanied the king in all his journies into Burgundy, Alsace, and upon the Sarre, where he had flying camps to keep his troops in breath, and his frontiers in security. Lewis every day distinguished her with new marks of favour, which madame de Maintenon as constantly improved to the queen’s advantage.

In their return from Strasbourg, the queen was seized with a dangerous illness; the king appeared exceedingly grieved at it; madame de Maintenon divided her cares between the king whom she comforted with a sympathising tenderness, and the queen whom she attended with the most affectionate assiduity. The physicians having declared that there was no hope of her life, the whole court was in tears, either through real grief, or the influence of example. The dauphin with tears and groans, desired he might be permitted to receive a last blessing from his dying mother, and the confessor did not neglect to make a spectacle so moving, and, which had so great an effect upon the king, useful to his salvation.

The queen recovering her sight and speech, asked for madame de Maintenon, who had retired to be at liberty to weep and pray. She went to the bed-side, the queen drew her ring off her finger, and gave it to her, perhaps from a secret presage of what was to happen, or that she was willing to leave her an undoubted mark of her esteem; or what is equally probable, to

signify to the king the choice he ought to make, if he should one day resolve to despise prejudice, and make himself truly happy. Having now reached that moment when all but virtue and piety is nothing, she was going to discover her affection for the only irreproachable woman in the most licentious court in the world : but the words died upon her lips, and an inarticulate sound, interrupted by agonizing sighs, was only heard. Madame de Maintenon tried to suppress her grief, yet her tears would flow ; she spoke, reasoned like a christian, who ought to bear affliction with fortitude, and a moment afterwards filled the room with her piercing cries.

Such only as have carefully attended to her conduct, will believe these tears, and this affliction, to be sincere, who will consider that she lost her only support at court, not merely a queen ; queens are not lamented thus, but a friend, the greatest woman in the world, to whom she had done the greatest and most acceptable service. Let the treacherous suspect, let the malignant censure the grief of a person who they are resolved to believe had long foreseen, and long been preparing her way to an elevation, which, at most, was but possible to imagine ; especially at a time, when it is more natural to be lost in the melancholy reflections, which the view of a dying friend impresses upon the mind, than taken up with hopes of future grandeur. In madame de Maintenon these censurers only consider a woman, who, from a state of indigence and misfortune, was raised to be queen of France : they mark not the progressive steps of her fortune ; they never think of her as dame d'Autour, trembling through piety, perhaps through stifled love, and if they will through interest, lest the monarch, her benefactor, and her friend, should fall again into the snares of guilty passion, and deliver himself up to a woman who would make it the first condition of her yielding, that he should banish the troublesome devotee.

As soon as the queen * had breathed her last sigh, madame de Maintenon quitted the room, and was retiring to her own apartment ; but the duke de la Rochefoucoult, a favourite of madame de Montespan's creation, impelled by his extreme tenderness for his master, seized her hand eagerly, and said to her, ' it is not now a time for you to withdraw, madam, in the condition the king is at present, he has great need of you.'

Lewis however, appeared but moderately afflicted, for the queen's death : ' during five and twenty years,' said he calmly, ' that we have been together, this is the first uneasiness she ever gave me.' She had sometimes opposed his amours, but seldom complained of them, either because she believed complaints would not reclaim him, or that she thought it beneath her to complain : for she was remarkable for a greatness of mind, becoming a princess of her high rank ; an answer she once made her confessor sufficiently proves it. The good man having asked her, with great simplicity, if before her marriage, she had never felt the passion of love ? the Queen forgetting that she was at the feet of a man who represented the person of her Saviour, replied with some emotion, ' Ah no, how could that be possible ? there was no king in my father's court.'

This princess was a saint, but a mere woman was fitter for Lewis. She was formed by nature for a Carmelite, by birth placed upon a throne. She possessed every virtue, but those which became her rank, and situation : her piety often carried her to church, when the king solicited a private interview ; and her confessor, instead of prescribing to her, as a duty, those tender endearments, which might have fixed or recalled the king's affection, soothed her with ridiculous ideas

* Maria Theresia, infanta of Spain, born September 20, 1638, married at Fontarabie June 4th, 1660, made regent in 1667, and 1672, during the king's campaigns in Flanders and Holland, died at Versailles July 30, 1683, at three o'clock in the morning, aged forty-five years.

ideas of perfection, founded upon the sacrifice of the most lawful pleasures: there was not a surer way to give Lewis a disgust to devotion, than this chimerical purity, 'I always believed, said madame de Maintenon, and I have since known, by my own experience, that if the king had been married to a reasonable woman, he would never have violated the fidelity he owed her.'

CHAPTER VII.

The king's passion for madame de Maintenon.

MADAME de Maintenon was seriously employed in comforting the king, who only grieved through decency. She represented to him that such afflictions were proofs of the goodness of God, who like a tender parent chastised the child he loved, to make it more deserving of his love. She conjured him to renounce those pleasures he had been so blindly fond of, lest heaven should punish his resistance by adversity, or take vengeance on his guilt, by leaving him in a state of impenitence. The king promised every thing she required, but while his words expressed the deepest remorse, his heart glowed with the most ardent love.

The next day Louvois went, by his order, to madame de Maintenon, with a request, that she would attend him to Saint Cloud; he was likewise directed to hinder the dauphiness from being of this party; the king wanted to be at liberty, and the presence of that princess would have obliged him to some restraint. The minister having prevailed upon the dauphiness's physician to order her to be bled, under pretence that she was pregnant, advised her to keep her bed, and mentioned as if by chance the party to St. Cloud.

The dauphiness declared she would go, the minister made the condition she was in, an objection, but finding the dauphiness determined to attend the king, he pronounced these definitive words. 'His majesty
' does

‘ does not require these demonstrations of friendship,
‘ and the state has need of a prince.’

The dauphiness was excessively enraged when she found that madame de Maintenon only was to go with the king, the whole court was surprised at a conduct so incomprehensible. They could not believe that a woman of such distinguished virtue could be so soon subdued, nor were able to imagine that Lewis had formed the design, or entertained a hope of subduing her. Grief seeks to wrap itself up in solitude, but the king's grief was known to be very moderate. Is his majesty ashamed, they said, of letting his people see that he regrets his loss? or does he retire to Saint Cloud, to conceal his insensibility? or can he be comforted only by the society of an agreeable woman?

The king staid five days at Saint Cloud, and these five days were spent in affliction. Madame de Maintenon never ceased to weep for the queen, nor the king to shew her that he was more affected with her sorrow than with the loss that occasioned it. But finding that her tears could not be dried up, he was not able to suppress some railleries, to which, says madame de Caylus in her memoirs, I am not sure that my aunt did not reply in her heart, as the count de Guiche to the wife of the keeper of the menagerie, who alledged a thousand reasons for consoling herself for the death of her husband, *Oh! since you take it so, faith I am indifferent about it.*

The king judged of her tenderness for him, by that she expressed for the queen: in love, and sure of being loved, he was transported to find himself at liberty to tell her so, and madame de Maintenon was, doubtless, no less charmed that she might hear him. This mutual passion till then perhaps a secret to her who had inspired it, this tenderness which one had concealed under the profession of admiration and esteem, and which the other had dissembled to herself, and given it the appellation of gratitude, was now going to assume its true form, when no longer restrained by fear, and painfully suppressed by virtue. The queen's death set them

them free from inquietude; Lewis might now love without guilt, and madame de Maintenon might listen to his vows without scruple.

But still this was passion, and passion is always dangerous. The king's sentiments were virtuous, but he was a lover, and love cannot subsist without hope. Madame de Maintenon had not power to subdue them, and perhaps did not wish they should be subdued; it was enough that she could suppress her own inclinations, and be able to resist his. Lewis sought occasions to discover his love, madame de Maintenon avoided them, but still with the deepest respect.

The king was now for the first time, perhaps divided, between love and virtue, and for the first time was perplexed: he dreaded lest he should offend the object of his passion, yet he was impatient to let her know his sentiments: the death of the count de Vexin furnished him with an opportunity to declare them; madame de Maintenon had brought up this prince and wept excessively for his loss. 'Ah! said the king to her, what transport to be loved by one, who so well knows how to love.' He said no more, and trembled, lest he had said too much. Madame de Maintenon pretended not to hear these words, but the king, less timid after this confession, explained himself as clearly as if she had owned she heard them. The joy of both may be better imagined than described; the king was charmed that he had revealed, with decorum, a secret so long concealed; madame de Maintenon, because she had not been deceived in her conjecture: no woman, however cold and insensible, can see, unmoved, her lover at her feet, and madame de Maintenon saw at hers, her king and her benefactor, the most amiable of kings, the most generous of benefactors.

When she cast her eyes upon the ring which the queen gave her in her last moments, when she read the letters which consoled her for the death of that princess, as if she had been queen herself; when she beheld the prostrate court, whose homage seemed to direct and justify the king's choice, she, doubtless, hoped

ped a great deal from her fortune : but when she recalled to her remembrance the indigence of her former condition, how could she help rejecting those hopes as vain and ridiculous chimera's ?

Thus fluctuating between the alluring promises of love, and the severe suggestions of prudence, a secret inquietude preyed upon her heart, and made her hate the court, but could not prevail upon her to quit it. Full of too great ideas of the king, of too mean ones of herself, she blushed for the passion she had inspired him with ; she thought it shameful to be loved at an age when others cease to please ; her delicacy made her dread the reproach of artifice and frailty, and she was less sensible to the glory of being loved by her king, than to her grief, for the injury that passion might do his fame.

Her reserve, her modesty, her engaging softness, added new force to the king's passion, he was no longer able to live without her, he could taste no pleasure in her absence, with her only he conversed in private, with her he played in publick, she was the soul of all his amusements. If he retired to any of his country palaces, solitude had no charms without her ; when he was with his army, her image dwelt upon his thoughts ; he was not able to endure the shortest absence from her, and every separation plunged him into a profound melancholy. He who has outlived the first ardors of youth, seeks not for meer personal beauty in the woman he loves. Lewis forgot that the object of his passion was no longer young, and did not wish she should be so. All that could be beautiful without youth and bloom, was still so in her : her hands and arms were exquisitely handsome, the softest sensibility was in her countenance, her shape was finely turned, her air so majestick, that she eclipsed the most graceful women in the court : her eyes so bright, so expressive, that it was easy to guess what she was going to say, her smile so just, that it was as easy to guess what she had said. Her complexion of so dazzling a whiteness, so animated, so glowing, that it was scarce perceived she was no longer young : her wit ever new, ever lively and engaging ;

gaging ; her bosom still so lovely, or so truly guessed to be so, that at a ball a croud of masques entering at the same time with her, one of them could not restrain his hand from some liberties, ' Ah ! cried madame de Maintenon, it is the dauphin, no other man in France ' would dare do this.' And it was him.*

It is not therefore surprising that the king should conceive a violent passion † for a woman, whose beauty was always young, who repaired the loss of bloom by the nicest and most accurate choice of dress and ornaments, by graces which are confined to no age, by modesty which is the first of graces, and by a thousand insinuating charms which are not subjected to the law of time.

The coldness and reserve with which she treated the king, could not free her from his importunities. She often feigned business or indisposition, to be excused from the little parties of pleasure which he proposed to her : he saw through the disguise, and seldom admitted those excuses. She absolutely refused to go to Fontainebleau, during the pregnancy of the dauphiness, and the king was obliged to exert his authority upon this occasion ; he insisted upon her attending him thither : it was Louvois, who with joy in his eyes, rage swelling in his heart, delivered this peremptory message, so disagreeable to him, so pleasing to madame de Maintenon ; charmed with the sweet constraint, she obeyed the impulses of her own heart, in obeying the orders of her king, and in the duty of a subject found the innocent joys of a lover. By accounting in this manner to the publick for her conduct, she took away from the courtiers all suspicion of a guilty amour, and from the king all hope of subduing her.

As

* Manuscript of mademoiselle d'Aumale. *Memoirs of the abbé de Choisy*. *Memoirs of madame de Perou*. *Madame de Coulanges*, letters.

† *Memoirs of the marquis de Fouquieres*.

As solicitous to avoid private interviews with the king, as he was eager to procure them, she intreated him to let her divide the honour of his visits with some of her most intimate friends, of which number were madame de Saint Geran *, madame de Ventadour, the princess of Harcourt †, the dutchess du Lude, the countess de Grammont, all these ladies shewed an extreme attention to her interests, in hopes that she would not forget theirs. The king, too much in love to attempt to vanquish these scruples, and already too virtuous not to esteem her the more for them, granted her request. He compared this conduct with that of madame de Montespan, who scarce observed the first laws of decency; while in others she censured even innocent freedoms, she indulged herself in the most scandalous excesses, and scrupled not, when with her lover, to throw off all restraint, before those children whom she governed with the greatest rigor, and in whom she would not pardon the guiltless gaiety of youth.

The virtues of madame de Maintenon, when thus contrasted with her rival's vices, shone out with redoubled lustre; although her person had not been beautiful, she would have charmed the king by the qualities of her mind: the graces of modesty, virtue and wit, are far more powerful than beauty over a heart

* N. J'o. married to Bernard de la Guiche, count de St. Geran, knight of the king's order, lieutenant general of his armies; he died suddenly, March 18, 1696. The duke de Bethune said of him, *Upon the whole, St. Geran is a very good kind of man, but it is necessary that he should be killed, in order to be solidly esteemed.*

† Frances de Brancas, daughter of George de Brancas duke de Villars; he died in 1657, aged 89 years. She was married in 1667 to Alphonso, Henry Charles de Lorraine, prince d'Harcourt; she was lady of the palace to the queen, and on 1679, attended the queen of Spain to Madrid; she died April 13, 1715.

heart already fated with guilty pleasures. Lewis was seized with a respectful awe, in the presence of the first woman who loved him with innocence, who confessed that love without design, who was too secure of herself to dread his importunities, and too prudent to despise the rash censures of the world. He found more difficulty in obliging her to a confession of her love, than in gaining the person of any other woman. La Valliere, Montespan, Fontanges, had thrown themselves into his arms. Maintenon received the communion every week. They exacted perpetual attentions, unwearied assiduities of him; she repressed his ardours, and avoided his sight. They tired him with importunate requests for their relations and dependants, she only recommended the poor to his benevolence. It was by such comparisons often repeated, that the king confirmed her empire in his heart. Vice can only give transient inclinations, virtue alone can kindle great passions: and not till now did Lewis begin to love.

Yet whether it was that he still entertained hopes of triumphing over her virtue, or that he was anxious to let her know those sentiments, which, before so many witnesses, he could only discover but by little cares and assiduities which love suggests; he would sometimes visit her when she did not expect him: madame de Maintenon made him sensible, that, if he had not been her king, she would have obliged him to retire, and Lewis never failed to take advantage of his being so, to protract an interview which he gained with so much difficulty. All her endeavours to keep him from her, served only to increase his desire of seeing her, and the simplicity of virtue, did all that the most refined artifice could have effected. Madame de Saint Geran asked her once, if the king still importuned her with his love? 'This passion, replied madame de Maintenon, will not be soon subdued; I send him away always in grief, but never in despair.'

Their mutual passion was still a secret to the court, when one day, as they were at the chace, madame de Maintenon betrayed herself by an unguarded expression
of

of tenderneſs. The king was thrown off his horſe, and thoſe who helped to raiſe him, cried out that his arm was broke. Madame de Maintenon burſt into tears, the king gazed at her earneſtly, the courtiers ſmiled, and madame de Montespan pretended that it ſtill belonged only to her to weep ſo tenderly for the king.

However, the king's arm had been only put out of joint by his fall, and madame de Maintenon received the compliments of the court upon his recovery, as if ſhe had a right to claim the greateſt intereſt in it. The provinces applied to her to procure permiſſion for their congratulatory addreſſes upon this occaſion. Several ladies, who had refuſed to bend to the haughty Montespan, did not diſdain to ſolicit the friendſhip of this new favourite. Of this number were the dutcheſſes de Chevreuſe and Beauvilliers : notwithſtanding their fondneſs for the court, notwithſtanding that Colbert their father had married their younger ſiſter to the duke de Mortemar, they had, with a noble firmneſs, perſiſted in their contempt for the marchioneſs de Montespan, but were now charmed with having an opportunity of reconciling themſelves to their king, whom they had offended by that contempt. The homage they paid madame de Maintenon, was not conſidered by them as ſervility, in a place where virtue is ſo rarely ſeen that even pride yields to its pre-eminence.

Madame de Montespan, hurried along with the torrent, applauded her conduct, while ſhe grieved for its ſucceſs.

CHAPTER VIII.

Colbert and Pelletier.

Sept. 6, 1683.] **T**HE death of Colbert gave madame de Maintenon an opportunity to try her power with the king. This miniſter was taken away by a ſudden illneſs, though he had long languished under the grief Louvois had given him, by forcing

forcing him to ruin, by oppressive taxes, the people whom he had enriched by commerce *: he was the only man who ever fell a martyr to the publick good, the only superintendant of the finances who died in possession of his employment.

Before he died, he bore this noble testimony to the king's patience and sweetness of temper, that during five and twenty years, which he had served him, he never heard but one passionate expression fall from his lips †. His wife speaking to him of business, even in his last moments, he said, 'shall I not then be allowed 'leisure to die?' The king wrote to him in very affectionate terms, such as his long and faithful services merited: the dying man put the letter under his pillow, without opening it; 'how little are poor mortals, said he, affected with such instances of favour, 'when they are going to render an account of their 'actions to the King of kings.' A christian sentiment, which proved that power and riches had not lessened his piety, nor weakened his faith.

Who with juster confidence than Colbert, could present himself before the tribunal of God? Who had more good works to offer him! The labourer sowing with hope, and reaping with joy, the tyranny of the rapacious receiver repressed, the arts encouraged, the poor relieved, a hundred millions a year returned to the country, such true affection for the state, such a patient zeal, so insensible to fame, so accessible to compassion, the inflexibility of a minister to the insatiate courtier, the charity of a christian to the industrious people; to him may every good citizen address the prayer of Erasmus to Socrates, *sancte Socrates, ora pro nobis.*

The marquis de Louvois, who had long found himself waning in his prince's favour, was resolved, at last, to make some acquisition to his power; he fell upon the spoils of the deceased minister, and obtained the

* Manuscripts of madame de Maintenon.

† Memoirs of the marquis de Dangeau.

the superintendance of the buildings. Madame de Maintenon could not resist the desire she felt to make a minister, and openly favoured the party who proposed monsieur Pellitier, formerly prévôt des marchands, her intimate friend, and, lastly, him to whom she entrusted the care of her affairs. The king, when he gave him this post, said, 'I have fixed upon him because he is a good man, and who, I am sure, will not oppress my people.'

The new comptroller-general, at first justified the king's choice, by his easy manners, and amiable modesty, which his flatterers contrasted with the reserve and austerity of his predecessor, but the event shewed that Colbert's place might be filled, but its duties not performed. Pelletier sought in transient expedients, those resources which Colbert found in the equitable assessment of moderate imposts. His incapacity was soon discovered, he acknowledged it himself, and laid down a burden too heavy for him to sustain. Madame de Maintenon seldom after this, took any part in the revolutions of the ministry, and frequently said, a minister ought not to be made by a cabal, the public approbation should direct the king's choice*.

CHAPTER IX.

Madame de Maintenon refuses the post of lady of honour.

1684.] **M**ADAME de Maintenon had already forgiven the treachery of madame de Richelieu: but she remembered it still. This dutchess had only loved her in her distress, and in mediocrity; envious of her favour with the king, enraged that she had had it in her power to pardon her for a malicious attempt to ruin her: instead of repairing her late treachery by resuming her former kindness, she joined the discontented marchioness de Montespan, and used her utmost endeavours to revenge the injury madame de

* Memoirs of madame d'H

de Maintenon did her, in despising that which she had received from her, 'go on, madam, go on, said 'madame de Maintenon to her, load me with injury 'upon injury, you shall never make me forget the 'favours you have formerly conferred upon me.' Madame de Richelieu was more irritated by this offensive gratitude, which shewed even to herself the baseness of her own conduct, she would have broke those ties which bound madame de Maintenon to her, and not being able to make her ungrateful, she endeavoured to force her to appear so. Madame de Maintenon, tho' exposed every day to the effects of her hatred, still continued to be her friend, and while the dutchess de Richelieu was prejudicing her in the opinion of the dauphiness, madame de Maintenon made use of all her influence to keep her well with the king.

Such extreme patience and generosity, might well surprise the dutchess de Richelieu, for madame de Maintenon could have returned her upbraidings with others equally just. Why did she not say, 'when I 'was in distress you honoured me with your friendship, 'you admitted me to your table, and ten years afterwards I procured you the post of lady of honour to 'the queen?' But for noble minds, the first obligations are debts which can never be wholly repaid, even by greater obligations: and the benefactor is a master who never loses his superiority, he may be hated, envied and despised, but he will be always treated with respect.

Madame de Maintenon struggled against the impulses of her just resentment, to preserve to her enemy some remains of consideration, and to give her a taste for good actions, by procuring her to be chosen superiour of the *charitable society* which had been just formed at Versailles. This society was solely her work, she had already established one of the same kind at Bagneres. Naturally tender and compassionate; prosperity, which steels the hearts of others, softened her's still more, power increased her humility, and the gaiety of a court but strengthened her piety. She was never

satisfied

satisfied with doing good, and thought but little done while any remained to do. She, therefore, associated herself with some ladies, who, by prevailing upon others to join them, their benevolence might be more extensive, and thus her zeal procured relief to a multitude of miserable wretches, for which her own estate was not sufficient. These ladies met from time to time, to give an account of all the unfortunate persons, that had been recommended to them, and to concert measures for their relief. This gave rise to the *charitable society*; every meeting began with a pathetick exhortation, and ended with a collection which was distributed among the poor, and, particularly among young girls, whose distresses exposed them to the danger of seduction. The ladies of the court at first constantly attended these assemblies, which met every week, they were desirous of being taken notice of by the king, and each strove to exceed the other in their contributions, madame de Maintenon discovered the motive of this emulation, and took advantage of the high favour she was in to maintain them in it, she forced from vanity what she could not obtain from virtue; but by degrees this ardour decreased, and this institution would have fallen, if she had not supported it by a very uncommon abuse of her interest, she made distinctions at court, the rewards of christian charity.

. May 27.] The dutchess de Richelieu was seized with a malignant fever, which carried her off in a few days. Death found her occupied with good works, and almost free from her resentment against the woman who had given her a taste for them. The poor and her husband mourned her loss. The duke de Richelieu had, when very young, conceived a violent passion for her, and in a maturer age, did not repent a marriage which had been so strenuously opposed by madame d'Aiguillon, and so openly favoured by the prince of Condé. Some years afterwards the marquis de Richelieu made a more disproportionate choice, he married mademoiselle de Beauvois, a young girl who was neither beautiful nor well born, but who was as much
distin-

guished for her amiable qualities, as the dutchess for her refined artifice. ‘ My nephews, (said madame Aiguillon in the bitterness of her grief,) my nephews have always gone from bad to worse, the eldest married the widow of a man whom no one knew, the second the daughter of a menial servant of the queen’s. I hope the third will take a wife out of the family of the hangman, certainly my uncle was not very wise, to damn himself for this.’

The king was at the siege of Luxembourg, when he heard of the dutchess’s death, madame de Maintenon had attended him to this siege, and by her extreme sollicitude and anxious fears when he exposed himself to any danger, discovered those sentiments, she laboured so much to conceal. She was so greatly afflicted for the death of a friend, who for two years had ceased to be so, that the dauphiness, either to comfort or to afflict her more, told her that madame de Richelieu would not have given a tear to her loss, and informed her of some cruel censures thrown on her by that lady, which madame de Maintenon had till then been ignorant of. The princess seemed to take pleasure in humbling her, by repeating all the mean and scandalous things she had heard of her, but madame de Maintenon exalting herself in proportion as her mistress abased her, assumed all the dignity of conscious virtue, she explained all the motives of her conduct, with such clearness, and without seeming to condemn either the credulity of her mistress, or the malice of madame de Richelieu, she so fully proved her innocence by a long series of incontestable facts, that the dauphiness yielding to the force of truth, confessed that she had been deceived, and promised her never to be deceived more with respect to her. Madame de Maintenon used often to say, ‘ There is no policy so secure as innocence, and this was all mine.’*

Already

* Memoirs of mademoiselle d’Aumale, of madame de Perou.

Already the ladies of the court formed cabals, and laid schemes for the post of the dutchess de Richelieu. Madame de Maintenon, whom they thought too inconsiderable to possess it, but great enough to give it, was applied to by the different candidates. The king left the dauphiness at liberty, to act as she pleased in this affair, the dauphiness intreated him to direct her choice: the king assured her he would not lay any constraint upon her; the princess replied, that she had no will but his. 'Well then, madame, said the king to her, your choice will be soon made.' The dauphiness immediately named madame de Maintenon, and the king assented with pleasure. A report was spread at court that madame de Maintenon was to be made lady of honour. No one either believed, or would venture to contradict it, however, some spoke and acted as if this post was still to be given away, and others as if it was already given.

The king charmed that he now had it in his power to place at the head of his court, the woman who reigned in his heart, flew to the apartment of madame de Maintenon, that he might be the first witness of the joy this news would give her: so little did he still know of her true character. She received it with the most perfect indifference, yet with the deepest respect, and appeared more worthy of the first place than solicitous to possess it. She represented to the king, that so elevated a station would expose her to envy, which it was better to disarm by moderation than to increase by ambition; that she could not forget what she had been, and how greatly she was now raised; and that gratitude and duty obliged her to remind him of the laws of decorum, since he condescended to forget them in her favour. 'With regard to the honour,' added she, 'which this place would confer upon me, do I not enjoy it all in the offer your majesty is pleased to make me of it?'

The king insisted upon her accepting it; madame de Maintenon persevered in her refusal: Lewis had

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not then entertained those great designs in her favour, which afterwards he was himself astonished at, for instead of offering her the place of lady of honour, he would have intreated her to resign that of dame d'Autour: nor could madame de Maintenon either foresee or expect that amazing elevation, for which she is said to have laid such deep schemes, otherwise she would have permitted the king to raise her insensibly. Such as are too malignant to give to virtue the praise of any action which may be attributed to vice, will say that she exalted herself more by refusing this place than by accepting it. It is certain that in any other but madame de Maintenon, such seeming humility might be founded in pride, in her it could only proceed from a principle of modesty, and a conscious sense of her inferiority. A dutchess, by declaring the place of a lady of honour above her rank, would have appeared to despise it, but when the widow Scaron said it, she said a truth, and was easily believed; in a word, Tacitus, who judges so severely, yet often so justly of mankind, would not have condemned this refusal.

The king acquainted the dauphiness with it, who either depending upon the firmness of madame de Maintenon, or desirous of repairing the injuries she had done her, went to her apartment, and laying aside all her haughtiness, condescended to intreat her to accept the place. She endeavoured to destroy the too humble opinion she seemed to conceive of herself, by expressions of the highest esteem and friendship, and feigned to look upon her refusal as proceeding from some remains of discontent. Madame de Maintenon continued inflexible, and the princess complained of her obstinacy to the king with great surprize, and probably with a secret joy.

Lewis deferred filling the vacant post, with a hope that the habit of officiating as lady of honour, would at length determine madame de Maintenon to accept of it; but she, either apprehensive of entering into a kind of engagement, or of acquitting herself too well in her office, or perhaps distrusting her own resolution, insisted

insisted upon madame de Rochefort's performing the functions of lady of honour, till the king and the dauphiness appointed one. That lady resigned them all to her, as supposing she would soon have a claim to them.

The king again intreated her to accept the place, madame de Maintenon again absolutely refused it. 'Since you will not enjoy my benefits, said the king to her, you shall, at least, madame, enjoy the honour of your refusal.' Madame de Maintenon begged him to be silent, but the king related it that very afternoon to the whole court.

The countess de Miossens and the dutchess d'Arpajon, with whom madame de Maintenon had been intimately connected, before her appearance at court, were candidates for the post of lady of honour, and severally urged their pretensions.

The manners of both were irreproachable, both were remarkable for great sweetness of disposition and regularity of behaviour, such was the known virtue of the former, that tho' a heretic, she was offered the post of lady of honour, but madame de Maintenon could not prevail upon her to go to mass for the chief dignity of the court. A year afterwards, madame de Miossens turned Roman catholic, without a bribe. The king's choice at length fell upon madame d'Arpajon. * This lady was sister to the marquis de Beuvron † with whom madame de Maintenon had spent so many agreeable hours in her youth, and whose family she patronised, even to the third generation.

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* Catharine Henrietta d'Harcourt, married April 24, 1659, to Lewis, duke d'Arpajon, chief of the king's orders, and Lieutenant-general of the province of Languedoc. This nobleman was father to the countess de Noailles.

† He died April 23, 1705, aged seventy-eight: he was father to Henry duke d'Harcourt, peer and marshal of France, born April 2, 1654, and died October 19, 1718.

Tho' she had refused the place of lady of honour, yet she willingly accepted that of superior of the charitable society, vacant also by the death of the dutchess de Richelieu ; she had vowed to devote to the poor all the power her favour with the king put into her hands ; she took delight in administering to their necessities herself ; and being always apprehensive that the good she intended to do might be misapplied, she distributed the alms with her own hand. She felt with the most tender sensibility the distresses of these objects of her benevolence, and in the center of all the conveniencies and pleasures of life ; her imagination painted in the strongest colours their poverty and sufferings, and impressed the mournful image on her heart. She inspired the king with compassion like her own, by expostulations and complaints, which all her prudence could not make her restrain. ' Ah ! why, would she often say, why so prodigal of money, for shews and entertainments for the luxurious courtiers, while thousands of your poor people are dying of hunger ?'

The report of her extensive charity spread over the provinces : from every part they had recourse to her, as the common patroness of all the unfortunate. The poor and the rich found access to her equally easy ; the haughty cardinal, and the despised capuchin, were seen to enter her closet together ; the prince, and the beggar covered with rags.

One day there appeared in her antichamber a man, who with some difficulty, making his way through the croud, accosted her with a respectful freedom, and thus spoke to her : ' It is now, madam, forty years since I have seen you : yet it is possible you have not entirely forgot me. You may remember, that at your return from Martinico, you used to come every thursday to the gate of the jesuits college at Rochelle, where, according to the custom of the greater part of our societies, the young fathers distribute food to the poor. I was in my turn employed in this office ; I distinguished you among the croud of beggars : I am not afraid, madam, to recal an incident

dent to your remembrance, which you may acknowledge without a blush. I was struck with the nobleness of your countenance, you did not appear to me to be formed for such an abject state; I took notice of your confusion, when you presented yourself to have part of the alms, and I felt the tenderest pity for you.' 'You then, monsieur, replied madame de Maintenon, are that charitable religious, who, to spare me the shame and mortification of being confounded with those unhappy wretches, caused the victuals to be sent home to me, and expressed the kindest concern at your inability to give my distresses a larger relief; you twice saved my life, first by the food you gave me, and by your generous pity for what I suffered, at being obliged to ask publickly for an alms.' She then desired to know how she could serve him, and made him follow her into her closet, to spare him in her turn, the humiliation of disclosing his necessities before the croud. There the old man told her, that he had quitted the jesuits several years ago, that he was then master of a school in a small village; that all his ambition terminated in getting a curacy, and having heard of her elevation, and her benevolence, from public fame, he had hoped to obtain what he wished, through her interest, and perhaps from her gratitude. Madame de Maintenon thanked him for a confidence so obliging for her, and told him, that she never concerned herself in the nomination to benefices; that she knew not whether he was qualified for a curacy, but that she was very sure he was charitable: that she intreated him therefore to accept for the present, of a purse of a hundred pistoles, which she gave him, with a promise, to fill it every year with the same moderate sum. 'I would do more for you, added she; but I enjoy not yet all the profits of my place, on account of the assistances I owe my relations: for you are not the only person who compassionated my distresses in my youth.'

The king that moment entering her closet, she said to him: 'See here, Sire, a man who acted the part of a father to me in my youth; and be no longer surpris'd, that I sometimes importune you for unhappy orphans.' She then related to him the whole story, either that she was transported by her gratitude, or that she was solicitous to prevent the malignant repetitions of her enemies, for pride is ever highest, when it most seems to seek abasement.

The mingled croud of courtiers and suppliants, who were in the anti-chamber, seemed extremely surpris'd, that in the looks and behaviour of madame de Maintenon, they neither saw shame, uneasiness or ostentation, and madame de Maintenon, was doubtless no less surpris'd at the meanness of their astonishment, for to great souls nothing is difficult.

Recollecting one day some passages of her former life, she remembered, that being to receive several persons of quality at her house, she had borrowed some furniture of a washer-woman, who had refused to take any money for the loan of it. Ashamed at having so long neglected to return an obligation, she ordered her servants to seek for this woman. After many enquiries, they at length found her lodging, in a garret, loaded with years and infirmities. Madame de Maintenon went to see her, recalled to her remembrance the loan of the furniture, settled a small pension on her for the remainder of her life, and paid her the first quarter immediately: every day she repaid by private benefits, the obligations she had received in her youth, and her grateful benevolence discovered in the most distant provinces, benefactors, who were astonished to find themselves not forgot.

CHAPTER X.

The marquis de Richelieu is pardoned by the king.

THE king's esteem for madame de Maintenon increased every day, and his tenderness grew with his esteem: to please her he adopted her sentiments, and regulated all his inclinations by hers; glory had been his idol; he now acknowledged the vanity of it, and loved nothing but the public good. Scarce a day of his reign, had passed without being distinguished by a victory, or graced by some new magnificence; but now every day produced some useful reflexion; some act of benevolence, some measures for the peace of Europe, and some grants for the relief of his subjects. He had loved hunting passionately, but now acknowledged that the hours he spent in this exercise, were due to the cares of his empire; and he became more avaritious of his time. It was his taste for theatrical entertainments that produced those master pieces of the French scene, for which all nations have envied us; but now he seldom went to the play-house, and appeared there but once during the year of mourning for the queen: the arts lost by this change, but the nation was the better for it. Those hours which he used to trifle away with the indolent courtiers, were now employed in his closet with his ministers; and the more he applied himself to the affairs of state, the stronger was his conviction, that it was neither possible, nor fit that a king should have leisure.

While his whole attention was thus engaged in the painful duties of his station, and in repairing the horrible devastations of war, madame de Maintenon by her advice and her example, forced him to give part of his cares to the relief of the poor. Lewis revered her benevolence, and one evening the conversation happening to turn upon the incapacity of men, and the talents of women for publick employments, he said to madame de Maintenon, 'And you, madame, are

‘ well qualified for the post of great almoner of France.’ *

Her power with the king, was no less useful to persons in disgrace, than to the poor; she even shielded the marquis de Richelieu under sentence for a rape, from the rigor of the offended laws. No one would venture to solicit for his pardon; nor had Lewis ever granted one for this crime, the only one, which, in his opinion, clemency could not forgive. He had indeed, in some degree, committed it himself; but what in a subject is an atrocious crime, in a king is but a venial sin: madame de Maintenon, who was a friend to all that bore the name of Richelieu, represented to him, that he could not with justice punish a crime, of which he had given so public an example, and forced, from his own indulgence to himself, the pardon of a man who had dared to imitate him. But to prevent such acts of violence from being hereafter committed, through a hope of escaping with impunity, it was expressed in the *letters*, that the marquis de Richelieu was pardoned, in consideration of the great services of cardinal Richelieu †; the laws were still silenced by the name only of a man, who, when living, had violated them all.

CHAPTER XI.

The Princes of Conti.

1685.] **T**HE prince of Conti was banished from the court, and had deserved to be so. Madame de Maintenon would have thought it an offence to virtue, to interest herself in the favour of a youth who was punished for the licentiousness of his conduct; but she permitted the princess of Conti to say all that tender grief could suggest, persuaded that the king would be more easily moved by his daughter, and that the prince would be grateful for the good offices

* Memoirs of the abbé Pirot.

† Memoirs of the marquis de Dangeau.

fices of his wife. By acting in this manner, she spared herself the disagreeable task of importuning the king, and pursued the plan she had formed for establishing union in the royal family.

Madame de Conti came to present two letters from the prince her husband to the king. 'I can refuse nothing from your hand, said Lewis to her, but I shall make no other use of these letters, than to throw them into the fire.' Madame de Maintenon intreated him to read them; he took them out of his daughter's hand, and burnt them immediately. However, the same day, he gave orders that the prince of Conti should be paid what sums he demanded of his own revenues; but that he should not receive any part of what belonged to the princess.

The prince, less obliged by this favour, than piqued at the contempt shewn to his letters, resolved to quit France: he had a numerous court during his exile, composed of all the malecontents in the kingdom; of the sons of the duke de Créqui, who had nothing to hope for; of the prince of Turenne, who was accused of having disobliged the dauphin and dauphiness; of prince Eugene, who had been refused a regiment; and many other young noblemen, whom the insolence of Louvois, or the austerities of the court had disgusted. The prince of Conti, and the prince de la Roche-sur-yon his brother, had formerly desired the king's permission to make a campaign in Poland, which the king refused to grant, saying, 'have patience, I will shew you enough of war.'

The two princes made a proposal to their friends to set out privately for Germany, and attempt some noble exploits. Prince Eugene, who only sighed for fame and honour, and from whom the peace lately made, and his disgrace with the king, took away all hope of either, received this proposal with transport, and prevailed upon these rash and imprudent youths, to take a resolution he was fixed in himself.

This design was executed with so much caution, that the princes were out of France before it was sus-

posted. The king shewed great uneasiness ; it was reported, they had resolved to enter into the service of the emperor, and their desertion was attributed to the ill usage they had received from Louvois. The court dispatched couriers after them immediately, with orders to return ; and Louvois wrote to the prince de Turenne, assuring him, that if he and his companions would come back, they should all be pardoned, except prince Eugene, who would never be permitted to come again into France. When this part of the letter was read, prince Eugene cried out : ' I will enter France one day in spite of monsieur de Louvois *.'

The princes were received in all the places they passed through, with honours that awakened their resentment for the contempt they had been treated with at the court of France. At Vienna, they were loaded with civilities by the emperor, whose pride was greatly soothed to see Bourbons among his courtiers. Every day the most superb entertainments were made for them, as if to insult the melancholy balls at Versailles : in a word, they amused themselves as well as Frenchmen could be amused, among a people who knew not how to be gay.

From feasts, shews, and magnificence, they flew to the tumult of war, either because they would force their king to repent the loss of so much valour, or hoped to obtain a pardon for their flight, by the great actions they would perform. Prince Eugene had a considerable command in the army, but all the others served in it as volunteers. In Hungary they saw both a siege and a battle, and did wonders in each, which the king heard with expressions of joy, that confirmed their hopes of being pardoned.

Mean time they corresponded regularly with their friends in Paris ; their letters were written with great freedom, nor were the answers they received less reserved. The marquis de Louvois being informed of

* Foulque's memoirs of prince Eugene.

of this correspondence, caused some of his spies to follow a page named Merfit, who had been sent by the princes from Hungary, and dispatched a courier to Strasbourg, with orders to the commandant, to arrest the page upon the bridge, just as he was entering Germany. Merfit was seized and stript, several packets were found upon him, which the commandant sent to the minister, who instantly delivered them to the king.

The first packet that was opened, contained a letter from the princess of Conti, one from the son of Louvois, and another from his son-in-law. The minister, in great grief and confusion, at the imprudence he had been guilty of, resolved at least to take advantage of it, to secure his own favour with the king; he concealed his disorder, ambition silenced the voice of nature, and he said to the king, 'If my sons have failed in their duty and respect to your majesty, I conjure you, Sire, to punish them as they deserve.'

The princess of Conti told her husband in her letter, that she had taken a maid of honour, immediately after he had made his escape, lest madame de Maintenon should set one over her, and added, *I sometimes take the air with the king and madame de Maintenon, judge how well I am diverted.*

The marquis de Courtenyaux, in his letter, expressed his concern, that his father had not succeeded in his endeavours to engage the king in a war. He afterwards ridiculed the king's great capacity for sieges, and his aversion to battles. Whatever might be the emotions felt by Louvois, when his son's letter was read, he shewed more indignation than grief at it. Madame de Maintenon was pierced to the heart by every malicious stroke that was levelled at the king; but Lewis, as much superior to injuries as above all praise, read these satires with the same indifference, that he would have listened to his panegyrick.

The dispatches from the duke de la Rocheguyon, and the marquis de Liancourt, were full of the most atrocious injuries. Liancourt, in his letters,

letters to the prince of Conti, called Lewis a king of tradesmen; he said that he was grown old before his time, that he was more infatuated than ever with his fondness for his village friend, with whom he shut himself up great part of every day, under pretence of writing his history, but that he believed the king

* * * * *. He gave a burlesque description of the entertainment at the palace of Sceaux, ridiculed the person who gave it, and all that were present at it, but particularly the king and madame de Maintenon, whom he never mentioned but with contempt: he concluded with an account of the publick audience that was given to the Muscovite ambassadors, and with insolent jests upon the king, who, said he, *is a theatrical king, when he is to appear in public, a king of scaling-ladders when he is to fight.*

The duke de la Rocheguyon wrote underneath, that his brother had left him nothing to add, but it is certain that when Liancourt read his letter to him, he said, 'what have you done, brother? if this letter should be intercepted, you will be thought to deserve death.'

The marquis d'Alincourt, filled his letter with insulting ironies in prose and verse. That of the cardinal de Bourbon, was a bitter satire upon the king's conduct, person, and government, and every where abounded with those harsh truths which leave indelible traces upon the memory.

Madame de Maintenon who would have thrown those letters into the fire, to spare the king the mortification of reading so many injurious censures, reproached the marquis de Louvois with her eyes, for performing so cruel a service. He who had disclosed the offence, seemed to her as criminal as those who had committed it. She could not comprehend why this minister, who took so many bold freedoms, did not venture to open these letters, and when he saw what they contained, give the writers a severe reprimand, threaten to shew their letters to the king, but have consigned them to the flames, and their fault to oblivion.

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As insensible as Lewis appeared to these insults, it is certain that there was more magnanimity than indifference in his moderation. Intoxicated with the incense of flattery, full of his own greatness, how could he, for the first time, learn that he had faults without being excessively mortified. He now saw that he had been praised without sincerity, that his courtiers had been sagacious enough to discover what he wished to conceal from them, and had judged with malignity of what they could not discover, that the woman for whom he had the highest esteem, was to them an object of contempt, and that he was in reality great only in his own eyes.

He sent for the dukes de la Rochefoucault and Villeroi, and shewing them their sons letters, asked them if they knew the seals. They both replied, with great emotion, that they were their childrens: read the letters, said the king; they opened them trembling, at the first words they fell from their hands. The duke de Villeroi threw himself at the king's feet, and bathed them with his tears. The duke de Rochefoucault, in the bitterness of despair, exclaimed: 'Our children have deserved to lose their heads; I dare not implore a pardon for them.' Then a moment after embracing the king's knees, he cried, 'But oh! Sire, they are young, and you are merciful.' The king raising them, said, 'I will consider of it, but let them not appear before me.'

The hope these words gave them was destroyed by the reflections they made on the greatness of their son's crimes: they went from the king's presence in agonizing terrors, imploring with their eyes, the safety of their children from madame de Maintenon, who only answered them with tears shed for the best of kings, so cruelly insulted, and for the grief of the tender and unhappy fathers who relied on her power with him.

A prince less capable of commanding his passions would have consigned the criminals to instant punishment, and the whole court expected that the audacious youths would have been arrested, and delivered over

to justice. Our manners were at that time softened and refined, yet a less punishment than death was scarcely hoped for. In a monarchy the sovereign and the man can never be separated even in thought: the prince may have faults, and even vices, yet to his subjects he is always the most respectable of mortals: writings which tend to diminish that respect, are acts of rebellion against the nation, the majesty of which resides in the legislator. Lewis, therefore, could not with justice have been called a tyrant, if he had punished the calumniators of his sacred person with death, but his soul was too great to admit of so mean a passion as revenge, his affections too mild, not to make it easy to him to pardon an offence committed only against himself: his clemency was a reproach to all subjects in power and in place, who are at once witnesses and judges in their own cause, and employ the highest acts of sovereignty to revenge their particular injuries.

The guilty youths were banished from the court, most of them were confined to a residence upon their own estates. The marquis de Liancourt was sent into the isle of Oleron, cardinal Bouillon was banished with ignominy, and the princess of Conti was deprest with a single glance. She went to the apartment of madame de Maintenon, bathed in tears, who only said to her, 'weep, weep, madam, for it is a great misfortune not to have a good heart.'

The princess of Conti was seized sometime afterwards with a severe indisposition; madame de Maintenon attended her during the whole course of her distemper with the greatest tenderness and care. The princess having earnestly desired to see the king, told him she should die contented if he would pardon her, and suffer her to hope that he had still some tenderness for her. The king shewed the most affectionate concern for her illness, and endeavoured to comfort her with the softest assurances of his forgiveness and his love.

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The duke de la Rochefoucault not daring to represent to the king, that the air of Oleron was very prejudicial to the health of the marquis de Liancourt his son, some other persons hinted it to Lewis, who immediately permitted him to retire to Verteuil, and afterwards to serve him at the head of his regiment, that he might have an opportunity of meriting his pardon.

The king at length went to spend a few days at a country house belonging to the duke de la Rochefoucault, and telling him that being resolved to pay his host, he thought he could not better acknowledge his civilities than by freely pardoning his son: 'bring him hither, said the king, that I may tell him myself he is forgiven.'

The duke shed tears of joy and gratitude, and assured the king that his son should, by his future services, efface the remembrance of his fault. The marquis de Liancourt appeared, threw himself at the king's feet, renewed the protestations which his father had made in his name, and from that time lived at court with the same ease and security as if he had not committed an offence, the hardest to forget, the most difficult to pardon. Lewis was always uniformly great; those who had injured him without cause, and whom he had punished without malice, he saw again without perplexity; conscious of his own worth, supported by his own esteem, he knew that his reputation neither depended upon the satires of Liancourt, nor the panegyrics of Boileau.

The princes of Conti and la Roche-sur-yon returned from Hungary, and appeared again at court, but were every where received with great coldness: they had been the greatest offenders, by the bad example they had given both before and after their journey. The king told madame de Maintenon, that he would take from the prince of Conti the privilege of the grand entries, and that the princess should signify his intentions to him: 'Sire, replied madame de Maintenon, leave to the princess of Conti the pleasing employment

'ment of bearing good news to her husband, let me be the denouncer of ill.' She acquitted herself of this commission with great delicacy, her message was afflicting, but she comforted him with promises that all his past conduct should be soon forgot.*

The prince of Conti died of the small-pox at Fontainebleau, and having no children, his titles and estates fell to his brother monsieur de la Roche-sur-yon, who married the daughter of the prince of Condé, obtained his pardon, and deserved to obtain it, as will be seen in the following part of this history.

CHAPTER XII.

The Devotees.

THE king, whose reformation was begun and completed by madame de Maintenon, persisted in a regularity of conduct, which soon produced a change in the manners of the court. Devotion began to be fashionable; those ladies who had been most remarkable for the licentiousness of their behaviour, affected the greatest zeal, the churches and confessionaries were now more frequented than balls and opera's had been before. The marchioness de Montespan, still solicitous to please, gave the example, and blended piety with grandeur. Shews and entertainments were almost neglected, the talents of wit and humour were less esteemed, every thing, even pleasure itself, wore a face of solemn gravity.

Lewis was charmed with these seeming conversions, he took all the merit of them to himself; to him the ladies sacrificed their prevailing passions, their lovers were discarded, or their amours conducted with the greatest secrecy; they no longer heightened their complexions with paint, the modes of dress and equipage

were
changed, and the prince of Conti, the prince of Condé, the duke of Burgundy, and the duke of Orleans, all of whom were
 * Manuscripts of the bishop of Agen, of the marquis de Dangeau, of madame de Glapion.

were regulated with the nicest regard to modesty and prudence, and from scruples about a rupture with Rome, they now expressed a sensible grief for it.

Madame de Maintenon was not deceived, she well knew how to distinguish between those who sincerely returned to God, and those who conformed to the prevailing taste, and, by professing piety, acquired one vice more. However, it is possible that madame de Maintenon, by advancing the glory of God, extended too far the power of the clergy. The devotees were consulted on every occasion, a curate of Versailles became now a man of prodigious importance, under colour of reforming manners, the church concerned itself in the affairs of the state; the confessors were masters of the secrets in every family, and took advantage of this knowledge, to give weight to their advice.

The publick loudly exclaimed against this abuse, and said the reign of the priesthood was now begun, that all were solicitous for the grandeur of the king, but that the good of the people was forgot; every new incident awakened these clamours, the zealots were accused of being the cause, that a brave and experienced general was suffered to remain idle, because he did not go to mass, and that a prince of the blood was in disgrace because he was a libertine.

The king was desirous of seeing the same harmony and concord in his court, as now reigned in his family, he reconciled those noblemen whom former resentments, or protracted law-suits, had kept at variance. Was there an infidel, who, on his death-bed, refused to see a priest, and receive the sacrament, Lewis wrote an emphatical Letter, with his own hand, to the dying man, and the priest is the bearer of it*; did any married couple live upon ill terms, Lewis sent the curate

* Dangeau's memoirs.

rate of Versailles to them with an order to love each other *.

From restraint proceed crimes unpractised before ; some young courtiers formed a society, into which the princes were initiated. It was said, that one of the first rules laid down by them was, that every member should upon his admittance, take an oath to renounce women entirely. It is certain that they committed the most scandalous excesses, and that women were always excluded from their parties.

The king was informed of these enormities ; he banished one prince, caused another to be severely corrected, and expressed so much indignation against this infamous society, that no one durst venture to solicit a pardon for the guilty youths. Of the duke de G . . . he said, ‘ I will leave him to the court, I despise him too much to punish him myself.’ The names of these licentious young men shall not appear here, thro’ esteem for the virtues of their fathers, and respect to the dignity of their children.

The exiles returned to court, and with them their crime returned also. The curate of Versailles, wearied with repeated complaints of the violences and seductions committed by the grandees, intreated madame de Maintenon to apply to the king for some remedy to these disorders : ‘ I have often done what you desire,’ said madame de Maintenon, but whenever I press his majesty to make an example of one of those criminals, he always answers, I must then † . . .

Devotion seldom produces a reformation of manners ; luxury, with all its train of evils, was now carried to the greatest excess. The king had unhappily given the example, and madame de Maintenon often said to him, ‘ Sire, you have given virtue a wound, which will bleed a long time.’

At the view of those royal palaces, the out sides of which gave an idea of the grandeur of the monarch,
and

* Memoirs of the bishop of Agen.

† Manuscript of the bishop of Agen.

and the infide disclosed his riches, and the elegance of his taste; foreigners were seized with astonishment, and the French with emulation; the nobleman imitated the magnificence of his king, and what twenty years before had been looked upon as an excess of profusion, was now thought a moderate expence. The princes of the blood consoled themselves for the loss of power in the state, by being allowed to preside over fashions, and to direct taste. Subordination was almost destroyed, ranks began to be confounded; he who was rich, claimed an equality with him that was born noble; the poor copied the rich; the clergy supplied the extravagance of vanity, with the money that was destined for the necessities of the indigent; and the financiers already threatened to incroach upon the offices of judicature.

It is certain that France had been enriched by commerce and by arts, but for want of sumptuary laws, the fruits of industry so zealously patronized by Colbert, were devoured by the natives, instead of being sold to foreigners; the ruin of the nation was begun by luxury, and compleated by the revocation of the edict of Nantes.

CHAPTER XIII.

Revocation of the edict of Nantes.

I Cannot without grief, open the wounds of my country, but perhaps it may not be useless to stop a little, and consider an event, which set bounds to the prosperity of France, and changed the whole system of Europe.

When Lewis, brought back to virtue by madame de Maintenon, suffered his imagination to be heated with the enthusiasm of devotion, he began to hold long and frequent conferences with monsieur de Harlai, arch-bishop of Paris, monsieur Bossuet, bishop of Meaux, and father de la Chaise, his confessor.

These

These conferences turned at first upon the duties, and afterwards upon the tenets of religion. The bishops and the jesuit bestowed such lavish praises on the zeal of Theodosius and Charlemaign for extirpating heresy, shewed Calvinism in so many different and all odious lights, so artfully exaggerated the glory he would acquire by crushing a monster, which six of his predecessors had not been able to restrain; that the king persuaded himself, the true means of expiating his sins was to make his whole kingdom catholick. He had allowed this notion to act so forcibly upon his mind, that he one day told monsieur de Ruvigni a protestant noblemen, that, to destroy heresy, he would with joy cut off one of his hands with the other.

This nobleman representing to him, that the edict in favour of the protestants, which was given by Henry the fourth, preserved by Lewis the thirteenth, and ratified by himself, was every day violated by decrees of the council; the king replied, 'My grandfather loved you, my father feared you; as for me, I neither love nor fear you *,' Ruvigni might have answered, yet we are men, and born your subjects.

Louvois was jealous of these frequent conferences; he discovered the secret, and trembled lest his influence should be weakened by it: he used his utmost endeavours to have a share in what was concerting, but what probability was there, that a minister for the affairs of war could be usefully employed in matters of religion? Yet Louvois hit upon expedients to introduce himself; he knew that Lewis loved ease and expedition in the execution of any enterprise, that the slightest obstacles cooled his fervor, and that he was convinced he should meet with innumerable difficulties, in his endeavours to convert so many thousands of his subjects. Louvois with all the confidence of security, assured him that he was furnished with the means of reducing them in a short time, yet the arbitrary exertion of authority was all he knew, and he proposed that

* Memoirs and manuscripts of the bishop of Agen.
Vos dilexit avus, timuit pater: ast ego neutrum.

that the arguments of faith should be enforced by the terrors of the sword; his plan was admitted and followed exactly, the provinces were filled with priests and dragoons, who eagerly contended which should make the greatest number of proselytes.

The French gazettes were now full of conversions, but not the least mention was made of the new missionaries by whom they were performed. The curates after having wearied out the huguenots with torments, at length bid them *taste and know the goodness of the Lord*.

Their deputy-general in vain complained to their ministers of the vexations of the intendants; the ministers promised them relief, and sent orders still more rigorous. They found they must either abjure or suffer. The persecuted protestants presented to their oppressors those sacred edicts under the protection of which they lived: Alas! this was opposing paper to steel.

After the army had prepared the minds of the huguenots for the reception of the true religion, it was thought necessary to strike the last great blow. They brought the king so many false lists of purchased abjurations, that Lewis believed the edict of Nantes was now useless, and need not be preserved for the small number of obstinate huguenots that remained. This cabal represented as provisional and extorted, an edict, the publick articles of which treated the protestants as necessary, and the private ones as faithful and beloved subjects: the whole kingdom, they said, would now be catholick; the fathers might possibly still resist the truth, but their children would be more tractable. Vain promises, ill founded hopes, which the event has proved to be false. After seventy years of oppression the descendants of those who were proscribed, have appeared again as numerous, and more obstinate than ever.

This great affair was not even examined by the council, so strong was the prejudice of Lewis, so great his delusion. Posterity may possibly wish to know what were the reasons which induced a prince so mild, so prudent,

prudent, so generous, to make four millions of his subjects wretched : let it be told then, that it was zeal, which made him cruel, that he had no cause either to hate, to dread or to complain of the huguenots, and that he knew them only by the services they rendered him : let it be told that there never was a process between two private persons which was not examined with more care, more equity, and longer protracted, than that which concerned the fifth part of the nation. The council unanimously voted for the revocation of the edict of Nantes, and among so many ministers not one man was to be found.

Gourville when he heard this news, foretold all the evils that must necessarily follow from so violent a resolution : Gourville was laughed at. We had occasion for the experience of a whole age to convince us, that the duke de la Rochefoucault's valet de chambre was in the right, and we have even now men invested with high employments who will not admit this truth, as if they thought they were answerable for their predecessors faults.

Chateauneuf drew up the *severe* edict, yet seemed to condemn the articles of it. The king there declares that there are scarce any hereticks remaining in his kingdom. Le Tellier sealed it, and died contented : the parliament one day breathing nothing but patriotism, the next full of the spirit of fanaticism, registred it without any remonstrance ; and Louvois took upon himself the care of putting it in execution. ' It is his majesty's pleasure, says he in a letter to the duke de Noailles in Languedoc, that those who will not embrace his religion, shall be treated with the utmost rigor.' Such was the method of conversion then, and such the arguments used to tender consciences. The huguenots in vain declared, that they had rather have no religion than one that authorised cruelty, that minds were not subjected like towns by force ; they were shewn the king's absolute order to think as he did. The janfenists became persecutors to avoid being persecuted themselves. The jesuits fulfilled the hopes that had been conceived from their known zeal for religion ;

ligion ; they preached, and they oppressed. Fenelon alone refused to have soldiers for colleagues in his missions of Poitou.

The archbishop of Paris condemned the revocation*, and publicky congratulated the king upon it. The pope expressed neither joy nor gratitude, which proved the truth of what the queen of Sweden said to the senate of Stockholm, ‘ I know the pope, said she ; ‘ he would not give a penny for all your souls.’ †

In Paris the revocation was judged of differently, some said that the kingdom would from henceforward be tranquil, as if it had not been so for forty years past. Others maintained that tranquillity was purchased at too dear a rate, that the huguenots had at first taken arms to secure to the Bourbons the crown which the race of Capet had possessed, and which the Guises had attempted to usurp ; that the wars we had afterwards with them, were occasioned by the catholicks who opposed a toleration, or by the restless ambition of the grandees ; and that the despair of an oppressed people, reduced to the necessity of holding clandestine assemblies, was more to be feared than the deliberations of Synods, where the king was present by his commissioners.

The bishops wrote in defence of the oppression, and attempted to prove, that Jesus Christ had commanded his disciples to make proselytes with stripes. ‡ In vain the oppressed huguenots alledged, that by not tolerating their faith, they only made hypocrites who laughed at all religion in secret, deists who openly combated it with arguments, while many were wholly indifferent and despised it : the catholicks laughed at their reasons, and insulted their miseries, and, while the Spanish bishops consigned to the flames those Jews who profaned the sacraments, the French bishops sent Calvinists to the Gallies for refusing to profane them. Yet these
persecutors

* Memoirs of the bishop of Agen.

† Memoirs of Christina queen of Sweden by monsieur Arcknoltz, volume the second.

‡ Manuscript of the bishop of Agen.

persecutors professed to serve a merciful God; the huguenots in tortures exclaimed against a God so cruel.

The clergy complimented the king upon having without violent methods re-united all his subjects to the holy see. The sectaries were not allowed to carry their complaints to the foot of the throne, so that Lewis was firmly persuaded that Baviile, la Trouffe, and Masillac were very gentle apostles. Mean time the rage of conversion spread desolation over the provinces: Infants were snatched from the bosoms of their mothers; the sacred writings were burned by the hands of the hangman; men of noble birth were made slaves; women were treated with ignominy for singing the praises of God in French; pastors were broke upon the wheel for not abandoning their flocks to the devouring wolves; old men were dragged to the altar by brutal soldiers, who with blasphemies ordered them to receive their god; the relapsed were thrown into horrid dungeons; the converts were surrounded with spies, who counted their sighs; fathers sat as judges upon the informations given in against their children; the dying were persecuted in their last moments by an odious priest, and gave up with their souls the rejected host. The carcases of obstinate huguenots, denied burial, were trod under feet, or thrown into the common sewers: a whole people governed by other laws, than those of their fellow-citizens, worn out by slow oppression, regretting the fate of their fathers, who were massacred in one night: and, to complete the horrors of this inhuman persecution, virgins violated in the arms of their agonizing mothers, or delivered up to tyrants, who * * * * * My pen refuses to describe the shocking scenes, but every enormity was practised that a monk foaming with lust, with zeal, and cruelty could invent.

This picture is not heightened by the strokes of prejudice; the history of the last age has preserved to us actions which would be incredible from their atrociousness, if the history of the present did not furnish us with

with the like *. The intendants are not yet weary of tormenting men, in honour of him who created them.

But now it may be asked, how was Lewis the fourteenth employed, while his ministers were reducing his finest provinces to deserts? he was celebrating with the most magnificent shews and entertainments, the nuptials of mademoiselle de Nantes his daughter, and the duke of Bourbon; projecting his own; congratulating himself upon the great number of conversions, and the facility with which they were made; compleating Versailles; beginning Marly, and listening to Boileau, who sung.

L'univers sous ton regne a-t'il des malheureux ?

' Can aught be wretched when a Lewis reigns ?'

E.

The cruelties exercised by the priests and their associates in conversion, the dragoons, depopulated the kingdom, but did not re-unite it in one religion. The huguenots left France by thousands, and carried into other countries their wealth, their industry, and their hatred to the religion of Frenchmen. What an irreparable loss to the state was the flight of so many subjects! What a loss to a king of France, who could not be forsaken by any subject that did not love him, and would not have been faithful if zeal would have permitted him!

All Europe astonished at the sacrifice made by policy to ambition, eagerly received the victims, who found among Turks more humanity than among their fellow-citizens. God preserve the pious sultan Mahomet, cried our enemies; while he lives, France will never be without ruined villages.

* See the complaints of the French protestants by Claude: the history of the edict of Nantes, by Benoit, and the manuscript history of the sectaries, after the revocation, by monsieur Court: see also *Accord parfait*, and les Pièces justificatives, at the end of the treatise on *publick worship*, by the deceased monsieur de la Chapelle.

But for this consequence, which they could not foresee, although the desolation occasioned by the military missionaries predicted it, it might have been said, that the design of the edict of revocation, which was to unite the whole kingdom in one faith, was an act in which religion and policy were equally concerned : but it is certain, that reasons of state had no force, till they had found the reasons of the church unsuccessful. Then it was that to console themselves for the loss of so many subjects, and for the mortification of so many recantations, they declared that in reality the state lost none but rebellious or disaffected citizens. Then the civil wars were remembered ; the Guises were not reproached ; the Rohans were in favour at court ; the unhappy huguenots paid for all.

Louvois basely sported with the royal word. The edict for restraining the protestants from leaving France, promised them liberty of conscience, and only deprived them of the public exercise of their religion. The next day orders were given out to take that liberty from them likewise : certainly that minister deserves to be punished, who prevails upon the sovereign to deal falsely with his subjects.

If the king had not been imposed upon, it is probable that he would never have revoked the edict. His letters to the elector of Brandenburg and to the duke de Saint Aignan, shew how justly he was capable of acting when he consulted only his own conscience. Van Robais told the comptroller of the finances, that the revocation of the edict of Nantes would absolutely ruin the useful manufacture of Abbeville. The king was informed of what he had said. Van Robais was allowed a chapel and a minister, both which were denied to marshal Schomberg, for want of knowing the price of a man. ‘ I would, said Lewis, have my kingdom catholic, but I do not intend that it shall be impoverished.’

The French sectaries were peculiarly unhappy. The Jews were permitted to leave Spain, but the protestants were constrained to remain in France, without churches, without public worship ; they met in deserts to perform

form acts of devotion, and these meetings were construed into seditious assemblies.

To violate laws which they could not observe without being guilty before God, and contemptible even in the eyes of the legislature, to sing the Psalms of David, to weep over the ruins of their churches, were crimes against the state. Hence proceeded those declarations which filled the gallies, and depopulated the kingdom; the monarch knew not how to refrain from punishing, nor the heretic to yield, the treatment they received, sometimes more, sometimes less rigorous, shewed the uncertainty of those principles upon which the court had acted.

Fame, that phantom, which the wise contemn, and which kings so ardently adore, snatched from the protestants their last remaining hope. Lewis was resolved to compleat at any price the project he had begun. Heresy became more obstinate by the persecution of zeal, and authority more tenacious by the opposition of enthusiasm; and this contest between conscience, which claimed to be free, and despotism, which exacted a slavish obedience, produced on one side fortitude to suffer, and on the other cruelty to oppress.

Lewis, tho' deaf to the cries of his people, yet heard the exclamations of Europe; he learned from foreign countries the transactions in his own, and his ambassadors told him truths, which his intendants concealed. Bonrepaux, Barillon, the count d'Avaux, assured him in their dispatches, that all the foreign courts were filled with the complaints of the protestants for the cruelties they had suffered. He afterwards informed the king that the protestant merchants were all preparing to leave the kingdom, together with three millions of his subjects. Lewis replied, 'then my kingdom will purge itself.'

The count ventured to reply, that, by purging itself, it would grow consumptive, and offered to send back to France, by gentle methods, a great number of tradesmen, of whom trades and manufactures had great need. 'If they will not abjure their religion,' said Lewis in his answer, it is better that they

‘ should remain in foreign countries, than return to mine with the liberty of continuing in their errors.’ These words did not shew the father of the people, but a rigid devotee piqued at his being despised.

The protestant princes often interceded with Lewis for these unhappy victims, and often found him inexorable. The English ambassador having desired the liberty of some gentlemen condemned to the gallies on account of their religion, Lewis replied, ‘ What would the king of Great Britain say, if I should make it my request that he would release the prisoners in Newgate ?’ ‘ Sir, answered the ambassador, my master would readily grant it, if you claimed them as your brethren.’

Some of the refugees forgot the affection they owed to their country, and the respect that was due to their king, and wasted, in writing scandalous libels, that time, which, if christians, they should have employed in sanctifying their sufferings, and if good Frenchmen, in praying for their king. Some of the most considerable bore arms against him, of which number were Schomberg, Ruvigny, the count de Roye, and others, whose malevolence more enraged than alarmed the court.

The catholics reproached them with being worse citizens than Cimon and Aristides, who had never attempted to carry fire and steel to the walls of their ungrateful country : as if the swords of heroes of all religions did not now belong to the prince who paid them best.

The refugees were blamed with equal injustice for the bitter complaints they made against their persecutors. The wretched may be allowed to sigh, christianity recommends patience to its professors, but does not require that they should be wholly insensible. Some of them, indeed, forgot that they were Frenchmen, but every endeavour had been used to make them forget it.

Nothing enraged Lewis so much, as that republican spirit which the persecuted protestants acquired in the free states where they took refuge. They tore away the

the sacred veil which covers those primitive rights, that cannot be discussed without being mistaken. At the sight of those treatises which sapped the foundations of monarchical authority, the wife exclaimed, 'God preserve us from an huguenot pope !'

The Dutch presses, always free, then licentious, poured an inundation of writings into France, in which the authors indiscreetly vented their resentment against all to whom they attributed their miseries. Louvois, who alone was guilty, alone escaped. The French imputed all the errors of their king to the man in whom he confided, and the woman whom he loved. The sectaries accused father de la Chaise of being the cause of those cruelties that had been exercised upon them, and yet he was the first who represented to the king the inhuman barbarity of digging up the carcases of huguenots, and dragging them through the streets upon hurdles; and madame de Maintenon, so unjustly suspected of animating the king to this oppression, would have trembled with horror, at the bare mention of so many unhappy wretches, hung by their hair to hooks in the chimnies, and ceilings of their chambers, stuck full of pins, or their flesh torn off with burning pinchers, hunted like wild beasts in fields and woods, blown up with bellows, and plunged into deep pits till they pronounced these words, *I will be reunited to the church*.

We are assured by several historians †, who have suffered themselves to be deceived by the exclamations of blind and unreasonable prejudice, that it was madame de Maintenon, who, with the jesuits, concerted the revocation of the edict of Nantes. This design however was conceived at a time when she was in

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high

† Limiers, Larrey, and particularly le Vassor, who in his history of Lewis the thirteenth, calumniates madame de Maintenon, and the family of Noailles, thro' resentment against the cardinal of that name, who had expressed great contempt for him.

high favour indeed, but had no influence in affairs. Lewis might mention to a woman, for whom he had an esteem, the deliberations of his council, tho' he did not ask her advice or take her opinion. The revocation was not a sudden sally of enthusiastic zeal, but the consequence of long prejudice. Madame de Maintenon, who knew not what excess of cruelty the devotees were capable of, had doubtless confirmed the king in his pious desire to see his whole kingdom catholics; but she was too prudent to recommend violent measures, and too mild and compassionate not to disapprove them. To charge any one with a crime without being able to prove it, is calumny; to impute to her upon uncertain grounds a crime opposite to her known disposition, is an absurdity; every thing that remains of madame de Maintenon justifies her. In one of her writings, addressed to the king, she freely condemns the penal laws, the forced communions, and such as breathing the spirit of the inquisition, suffered the rage of bigotry to extend itself over arts and commerce. It is certain, that she suspected those huguenots, who, excluded from all employments, could not be useful subjects, to be dangerous and disaffected ones. But she was sensible that the professors of true religion have always been persecuted, but never were persecutors; that the church has a right to punish heretics by anathemas, but not to cut their throats; and that the power of the sword is intrusted with princes against those who violate the laws of the state, not against such as erroneously explain the laws of God.

If she was silent on a subject which so deeply affected her, it was because she was in a manner obliged to it. The marquis de Ruigny * had often intreated her to take compassion on the miseries of her former brethren, and madame de Maintenon always replied, that she never presumed to concern

* After having served Lewis the fourteenth in several difficult negotiations in England, he entered into the service of William the third, who created him lord Galway.

cern herself in state affairs, and exhorted him to embrace the true faith.

Ruvigny, whom honour as well as conscience, obliged to be faithful to the cause he defended, could not be tempted to sacrifice it to his own private views; he thought he saw in madame de Maintenon, a greater disposition to hurt the huguenots, than to serve them, and therefore, to lessen the weight of her advice, he was rash enough to tell her before the king, that she was born a Calvinist, that she had continued so till her settlement at court, and that probably she was still a Calvinist in her heart.

It was not difficult for madame de Maintenon to clear herself from such an imputation; but it will be easily believed that she was offended at it, and that it might contribute to suspend the effects of her natural gentleness and compassion, and set bounds to the good offices she might have afterwards rendered the protestants, by moderating the extreme rigor which was exercised in the first rage of conversion.

Probably she was ignorant of those excesses of cruelty, for it was not at Versailles, amidst ease and luxury, near a throne every avenue of which was guarded by lying priests, and surrounded by parasites, who took care not to let disagreeable truths approach it, that she could hear the groans of Languedoc, Dauphiné, and Poitou, laid waste by the rage of bigotry; however her compassion was awakened by the recital of some new cruelties exercised at Paris, where they had not yet ventured to prove opinions by steel, for fear of enraging a people, who, though superstitious, were not divested of all remains of humanity.

Madame de Maintenon told the king that there was great reason to apprehend that the protestants, by such violent measures as were used to convert them, would be inspired with an everlasting antipathy to the true religion; she represented to him that only great crimes should excite his indignation, vice his zeal, and error his compassion. She spoke with such force and earnestness, that the king could not help saying to her; 'Your discourse, madam, gives me great uneasiness,

‘ does it not proceed from some remaining attachment to the religion you formerly professed *?’ Bayle made the same reflections upon a like discourse of queen Christina’s †. These two ladies, doubtless replied, ‘ To be good catholicks is it necessary to be cruel?’

It was confidently reported, that the king taking the air one day in his coach with madame de Maintenon, mademoiselle d’Armagnac and monsieur Fagon, the conversation turned upon the cruelties so uselessly exercised upon the huguenots; that Fagon related some particular facts, that madame de Maintenon wept, that the king seemed affected, and said, ‘ If the protestants have suffered in their persons and goods, I hope God will not impute it to me, the violences I never commanded.’ Lewis deceived himself by this hope; God punishes kings who are ignorant of what passes in their dominions.

C H A P T E R X I V .

Madame de Maintenon’s passion for the king.

TH E destiny of madame de Maintenon was not yet determined, nor was her heart at ease. The shame of being in love at any age, the indecency of being so at hers, perhaps her confusion at suspecting in herself desires but ill repress’d, and hopes too fondly indulg’d, the fear of occasioning in the king those inattentions which now troubled her devotions, her languor in exercises of piety, formerly practis’d with so much fervor, grief to find the king’s presence so necessary

* Memoirs of madame de Glapion.

† Queen Christina, in a letter to the chevalier de Terlon, having express’d her disapprobation of the dragonade (for so this persecution was called) Bayle said it was a remainder of protestantism.

necessary to her happiness, her regret at being obliged to avoid his visits, altogether threw her into great perplexity and uneasiness ; her elevation appeared to her a miracle, her love a phrenzy.

She was particularly apprehensive that she should be accused of having made religion subservient to her schemes for raising herself, and of assuming an appearance of piety, to fill the place of a mistress ; this idea was insupportable to her, even conscious virtue cannot exalt itself into a contempt of human judgments. She trembled at the bare suspicion of filling a rank stained with vices which she abhorred, and although certain of filling it without guilt, she was as much alarmed at the suspicions that might be entertained, or feigned to be so, as at that which she was sure of not contributing to. She thought she was accountable to God for all the rash censures which the court might form against her, either through envy at her fortune, or ignorance of her situation.

What should she then do ? should she quit the court, that was to leave the king, to leave the better part of herself, to leave the kindest, the most respectable of friends. Yet, should she remain at court, she hazarded the loss of her reputation, and gave scandal to all Europe, already astonished at that mixture of apparent piety and suspected frailty. Love made the first impossible to perform, and the second was inconsistent with virtue. In resolving to leave the court, she found something of meanness and hypocrisy, since she well knew that the king would either oblige her to remain there, or recal her if she went, and that she could neither disobey his orders, nor resist his intreaties ; she was afraid that the public, which had so cruelly ridiculed the flight of Valliere, would attribute her retreat to a project she had formed for enslaving the prince still more, and that her refusal to return would be thought the effect of the same refined artifice. In resolving to stay, she found every incitement but fame. In vain did she condemn herself for such a slavish dependence upon publick opinion ; she was not able to

shake off the yoke, and she was the sport of sentiments which a woman in love admits of, but which a devotee thinks criminal.

Thus torn with conflicting passions, she had none whose opinion she could ask, none whose advice she might regulate her conduct by. At a certain age a woman will not tell her most faithful friend that she is in love; to her confessor she will own it at no age. Madame de Maintenon tortured with fears, perplexed with uneasy doubts, certainly told her confessor that she was beloved. The abbé Gobelin, who always represented to her, God conducting her by the hand, vanquished her scruples, and by insisting greatly upon the injury she would do the king, opened her eyes, to see that she would do herself. The salvation of a prince, so deservedly dear to her, was in danger, to quit him was to deprive him of all that could engage his return to God, it was to snatch from him his consolation and his support, and irreverently to oppose the designs of providence. Let his return to God, be effected by virtue, by grace, or by love, it was of little importance, provided he did return to him. Madame de Maintenon was easily persuaded; her heart pleaded for the king, still more forcibly than her confessor. Gobelin, incapable of foreseeing even the nearest events, regulated her conduct, as if he had foreseen the most distant. Weak and narrow minds often perform what would seem only the production of deep reflexion, and extensive knowledge.

Madame de Maintenon, however, either to try the king's inclinations, or to accustom him to her absence, desired he would permit her to spend a month at her estate: she made this request, notwithstanding the insinuations of madame de Montchevreuil, who let her understand that those hours the king was wont to spend with her, and for which all the court envied her, she would find, at her return, had been engrossed by another. The dauphiness, who had not forgot the party to Saint Cloud, from which she had been excluded, readily consented to her going to Maintenon, but it

was

was more difficult to gain the king's permission, ' You may go, if you please, madam, said the king to her, ' I have imposed a law upon myself, never to constrain your inclinations, but only reflect how much you will afflict me, by leaving me only for a single day'.

Nothing is more tyrannical than the intreaties of love ; madame de Maintenon laid aside her schemes for quitting the court, and exerted all her prudence to escape the humiliating conjectures which were formed by her enemies, upon her equivocal situation with the king ; she succeeded, and the whole court was at length convinced that she was a favourite without being a mistress ; and by the respect that was now paid her, she found that her king was known to be only her friend.

CHAPTER XV.

Journies to Marly.

ALL the courtiers were now in her interest, part she had gained by her humility and gentleness, and the rest followed the greater number. She did not make use of these charms which time had still left her, to fix her empire in the king's heart ; her dress was suitable to an age more advanced than hers. She might have formed schemes to retain him in her fetters, but she was incapable of artifice ; in her behaviour to him she preserved a just medium between indulgence and reserve, it had all the complacency of a friend, and all the respect of a subject. She was particularly solicitous to avoid those critical moments, wherein a woman is necessarily obliged to give hope, or an absolute denial.

Lewis eagerly embraced every opportunity of showing the preference his heart gave madame de Maintenon over the marchioness de Montespan ; the latter saying she believed she should die very soon, and madame de Maintenon declaring that she thought she should

should live a hundred years longer ; that, said the king, would be the greatest happiness I could hope for.

The mistress received some new mortifications every day, at length she became inured to them, and bore them with fortitude ; madame de Maintenon was desirous of sparing her all, madame de Montespan never missed one.

The king found it necessary to remove her, to free himself from her importunities, and those railleries which had so often amused him, but of which he was now afraid. For this purpose the journies to Marly were contrived. Lewis thought he should be at liberty there, and consequently more happy.

He named all those persons who were to attend him, and Bontems lodged them two and two in elegant pavilions. The ladies found toilets compleatly furnished in their apartments, nor were the men neglected. When the ladies were named, their husbands accompanied them unasked. The sole ambition of the courtiers was to be of these parties * ; this it was which gave an air of favour, the only good air at court. The princess of Montaubon who had never the good fortune to be invited, offered the princess of Harcourt a considerable sum, to procure her permission for attending the king to Marly.

While the company diverted themselves at Lansquenet, Lewis, free from restraint, entertained madame de Maintenon, by his respectful attention invited his train to adore her whom he loved, passed every evening in her apartment, and assuredly did not, in these agreeable interviews disengage his heart.

The marchioness de Montespan, whom the king would have always excluded from these parties, and whom madame de Maintenon often invited through decency or through compassion, saw herself neglected with seeming fortitude, maintained to every one that her reign would return, and had the mortification to find that no one believed her.

She

* These parties to Marly lasted three days ; they went on a Wednesday, and returned on Saturday.

She suffered some satirical hints to escape her from time to time, forgetting that Lewis neither loved to rally, nor to be rallied. 'Sire, said she one day to him, I have a favour to request of you, leave to me the care of amusing the company in the second coach, and of presiding in the anti-chamber.'

She had it still in her power to make a noble retreat, but it was decreed that she should be punished for her past crimes, and that her rival's triumph, which her insolence had begun, should be completed by her imprudence.

Her repartees would have diverted madame de Maintenon, if they had not offended the king: one day when she observed a great number of bishops and curates in madame de Maintenon's anti-chamber: 'You are certainly, said she, hanging your anti-chamber, madam, for my funeral oration.'

The violence of her passions would have placed a bar between the king and her, which even the fall of madame de Maintenon could not have removed. The king was at first with difficulty persuaded to believe, that she had uttered some very imprudent expressions; he was afterwards grieved to hear that she shewed great complaisance to those who were disaffected to his government, but was transported with rage, when he found that in Paris she had no other society than that of his enemies, for enemies he believed he had.

The malecontents renewed their murmurings; those who were excluded from the parties of Marly, ridiculed those who were admitted to them in satirical songs. It was reported that one of the king's daughters had furnished some verses in a poem which equally attacked the king and madame de Maintenon. Lewis was sensibly affected with this ingratitude: madame de Maintenon endeavoured to appease him. 'Does this resentment, said she, become the greatest of kings?' 'Should this outrage, replied Lewis, be offered to the best of fathers?' Time assisted madame de Maintenon in her solicitations, the verses were forgot, and the

the princess was again permitted to grace the parties at Marly.

Envy and detraction did not spare even the innocence of madame de Maintenon: monsieur de Bâville intendant of Languedoc, when he saw the libels that were written against her, gave this testimony to her virtue.

‘ I was acquainted with her, says he, when she was
‘ madame Scaron; I have a hundred times carried her
‘ in my coach from the hotels de Richelieu and d’Al-
‘ bret to Saint James’s-street where she lodged; I was
‘ seized with the same awe that I should have felt in
‘ the presence of a queen, her look alone inspired it:
‘ all who knew her were surpris’d, that so much vir-
‘ tue could subsist with beauty so attractive, and po-
‘ verty so extreme.’

CHAPTER XVI.

The king’s design in favour of Madame de Maintenon.

THE efforts of envy and hatred to abase madame de Maintenon, contributed to raise her. The king who was every day more charmed with her, who saw her revered in publick, who thought nothing great, nothing meritorious but what she suggested, and what she performed, was so afflicted to find her pining in secret, and expos’d to all the malice of satirical wit, that he resolv’d to place her above calumny, and to confer so many honours upon her, that her enemies should be confounded, and even her friends amazed.

Notwithstanding the murmurs of some disaffected persons, all gave way before madame de Maintenon; the courtiers without her perceiving it, paid her the highest honour. A glance of her eye, half a word, or a passing salute, made the happy courtier believe his fortune was made.

The court seem’d to guess the king’s design in her favour, the marchioness de Montespan alone, saw not the torch that kindled the dying embers of a constitution formerly so full of fire; every one but her foresaw the consequences of an engagement founded upon esteem, and cemented by love.

A

A humorous wit designed a picture, in which la Valliere was represented with her hand upon the king's heart, mademoiselle de Fontanges with hers upon his purse, the marchioness de Montespan holding him with a fond embrace, and madame de Maintenon grasping his crown.

The king neither could, nor would live any longer without a mistress; he had vainly hoped to conquer his predominant passion, and was weary of deceiving his God, and his confessor; he was resolved not to marry again, because the interest of his people opposed it; he saw three grandsons, and wisely judged that princes of a second bed, would give rise to confusion in his kingdom, and divisions in his family.

Madame de Maintenon alone was capable of pleasing him; he saw no woman in the court more worthy of his esteem. He was habituated to her, her gentleness, her candor, her solid understanding and lively wit, promised him an agreeable companion and a faithful friend. It was true that she had been united to a man whose character had been a little contemptible, but perhaps she had only been his friend and not his wife. Five and twenty years had worn out that stain, and thirty years of deserved respect and admiration had restored her to the rank she had seemed born for; her marriage with Scaron was an injury of fortune which it would be noble to repair. He had no reason to apprehend that it would be said she divided with him that authority of which he was so extremely tenacious; he knew her to be modest, humble, prudent, incapable of abusing the condescension of her master. But what will the publick say? it will say that I crown the most deserving of my subjects; for what other than her would have refused the first employment in the court.

All that could dissuade him from entering into this engagement, and all that could confirm him in his design of doing it, by turns presented themselves to his imagination: glory and love maintained an unequal combat for some time, but love was conqueror, and reason told him, he could never make a better choice.

Madame

Madame de Maintenon was doubtless dazzled, tho' not blinded by the first rays of the king's project: Lewis pushed on by his passion, and perhaps perplexed by his scruples, resolved to open his whole heart to his confessor.

CHAPTER XVII.

Father de la Chaife.

FATHER de la Chaife had directed the king's conscience for ten years. Father Annat had the care of it before; he was a man of irreproachable manners, the jansenists loaded him with calumny, and yet esteemed him; he was so disinterested that he never gave a benefice to any of his relations, and never solicited the bishops for that favour. Father Ferrier succeeded him in his post, and imitated his predecessor in nothing but his zeal against the jansenists: he had a solid understanding, and very extensive views for the publick good, but assumed airs of grandeur and power, behaved as if he thought himself a secretary of state: he caused the list of benefices to be always given to him, which used before to be presented to the king, by the first groom of his chamber: his conduct spoiled all his successors, and he died without having taken the confession of the prince, whose confessor he had been for seven years. He said to one of his friends, 'I would rather that the king had a hundred Vallieres than one Montespan.'

After his death the king suffered his courtiers to determine his choice of a confessor; several were recommended to him, but marshal Villeroi spoke so advantageously of the piety, the rectitude, and great abilities of Father de la Chaife, that the king fixed upon him. This jesuit had been professor of divinity in the province of Lyons, and rector and provincial of a college there: he was born in Forez, his family was noble, but reduced to poverty, he was grand nephew to Father Coton, confessor to Henry IV. his
brothers

brothers were equeries to Villeroi, archbishop of Lyons, the greatest hunter of his time. He had a noble countenance, such as Lewis XIV. was fond of; his air was modest, his voice insinuating, his manners mild, affable and engaging, yet full of a noble frankness that disdained palliation.

He was more desirous of a good character, than of being in high favour with the king; he missed the character he was so fond of establishing, and acquired the favour he had neglected to cultivate: a faithful subject in every dispute relating to the right of nominating to benefices: he served his master with zeal, and left the pope to complain.

He loved wit, had a great share of it himself, and always patronised it. His influence was very small at his first coming to court; time, religion, and the more advanced age of the king, gave him more importance: he loved virtue, he pursued it without anxiety, he waited with prudence for favourable moments to inspire a love of it in the king, and eagerly seized the means: during the first years, he exercised his functions with so much vigour and steadiness, that he hastened the fall of madame de Montespan; and with so much wisdom, that the king esteemed him greatly, and began to confide in him.

CHAPTER XVIII.

The king marries madame de Maintenon.

IT is probable that father de la Chaise represented to the king the danger to which his passion for madame de Maintenon exposed him; perhaps, his penitent confessed to him that he had not yet disengaged himself from women, that he now loved one more than he had loved all the others together, and that if he contracted no actual guilt, yet his desires were with difficulty restrained; a sin condemned by christianity, which makes us answerable for our thoughts as well as our actions.

What-

Whatever passed between the confessor and his penitent, was wrapt up in mystery: yet it is not to be doubted, but that father de la Chaise was as much embarrassed, as pleased with such a distinguishing confidence. He demanded eight days to consider of what the king had imparted to him; no affair was ever more delicate, he was not permitted to have recourse to the opinions of others upon this occasion, the secret was confided to him. To make the king's passion lawful was but a trifle, but how should he reconcile it with his glory? The jesuit was restrained by a thousand different prejudices; the royal dignity, publick opinion, furnished strong ones; even the king's, in spite of the soft sophistry of love, were difficult to get over. He found it necessary to rise above those considerations of decorum, the least of which would have stopped a man who had less fortitude and less wisdom. To reconcile the dictates of his conscience with the respect he owed the lovers, he proposed to unite them by the indissoluble ties of a secret marriage, but performed with all the ceremonies of the church.

The king was charmed with this scheme, but either because he was ashamed to offer his hand without offering his throne at the same time, or because he was apprehensive that he should not be sufficiently master of himself not to offer both, he commanded father de la Chaise to make the first proposals. Madame de Maintenon, astonished, motionless, confused, listened, interrupted, exclaimed, asked if it was not a dream, a snare, a jest, and made the jesuit repeat a thousand times what she could not persuade herself to believe, yet was never tired of hearing.

Joy, gratitude, modesty, anxiety, curiosity and love, shared her divided heart; she saw those wishes she had sought to repress, all granted, those hopes she dared not to indulge, fulfilled. She thanked God, the king, father de la Chaise; recovering from her transport, she replied, that the king might dispose of her destiny, that she had no will but his.

Her

Her joy subsiding by degrees, she reflected calmly upon the proposals that had been made her. A private contract! her delicacy was wounded, her virtue was alarmed; who could answer for the king's heart? he was candid, sincere, generous, but still young enough to be inconstant. The more she examined this affair, the greater were her apprehensions; she had now charms enough to please him, graces enough to fix his affection, but that beauty which time had hitherto spared, would be totally defaced in a few years, and possession would abate his passion. Why might he not be disgusted with her, who had ceased to love madame de Montespan? might not private reasons, intrigues of state, treacherous counsellors, inventive malice, prevail upon him at length, to cancel a marriage his reason condemned. After her death, how might her memory be treated? During her life would not France consider her as his concubine, the publick know no mean between the mistress, and the wife of the king.

These thoughts were opposed by others no less powerful. Was it for a subject, an attendant upon the dauphiness, the widow of Scaron, to demand security of her king? She owed him all, and it was fit she should sacrifice every thing but virtue to so noble a benefactor: he might change, his affections might wander to some other woman, it would be her duty to endeavour to fix him, or to recal him. He might possibly revenge himself on her by a cruel indifference, for the resolution which love had forced him to take, she must then resolve to suffer with patience. If this mysterious marriage had its inconveniences, it had its advantages also: it secured to her the influence of a mistress, which the title of queen seems to destroy; it dispensed with those disagreeable ceremonials annexed to that rank, and subjected the king to all the pleasing solitudes of love.

Father de la Chaise determined her, by declaring that the king could not live without her; that marriage could alone preserve him from the fatal consequences
of

of this passion, that his eternal salvation depended upon it, and that the care of her reputation ought to yield to a motive so powerful: he reasoned with her upon her scruples, and love subdued them. Her tenderness for Lewis prevailed over all the specious arguments urged by honour and decorum, and formed those ties which rendered the king's passion lawful, without exalting the rank of madame de Maintenon, who became greater, but not more elevated.

Lewis silenced all her scruples, and removed every fear by a thousand oaths of everlasting love, and by a promise to authenticate this secret act. It was upon this promise that many persons believed this act was deposited in the archives of the apostolick chamber, but not the least trace of it was found, either in the papers of pope Innocent XI. in those of Favouriti who managed the affairs of that pontificate, or in the secretary of state's office, which a lady of great distinction, at my earnest intreaty got permission to have searched. Others say that the pope was consulted concerning the marriage, but this does not seem probable: the approbation of Rome was unnecessary upon this occasion: the law, which requires that all marriages should be publick, is a civil law, and by which the legislator himself is not bound.

But it is certain that both parties signed an agreement in writing, and I am acquainted with a man, who probably has it in his possession.

It cannot be imagined, that the first article of this contract, was, that the marriage should never be disclosed; it was love alone that made it, love never imposes a humiliating condition.

If it were allowable to hazard conjectures where facts are wanting, I would say that Lewis, who was, perhaps, desirous of raising madame de Maintenon insensibly, waited only for some favourable opportunity of declaring her queen; that he was prevented by the wars, in which William the third engaged him, by the duke of Burgundy's marriage, by habit which had formed the first delays: probably madame de Maintenon shewed no solicitude for it, and probably she refused it.

It must be acknowledged that these probabilities are weakened by reflections like these. Lewis the fourteenth and madame de Maintenon carried this secret with them to the grave. Is it not therefore apparent, that an inviolable secrecy was exacted by one, and promised by the other? Is it not to this promise that we must attribute the king's making no mention of madame de Maintenon in his last will, and that extreme solicitude madame de Maintenon shewed, to destroy every thing that could prove the certainty of her marriage? On the other hand, how can it be believed that Lewis should think so meanly of madame de Maintenon, as to fear this marriage would hurt his fame; so unjustly of himself, as to submit to a constraint, which the lowest of his subjects would have broken through; so unfavourably of posterity, as to believe that the railleries of some malevolent contemporaries would direct its judgment upon this action. Lewis revered madame de Maintenon as much as he loved her; he did not declare his marriage, because he knew that no one doubted of it.

It is related in some memoirs of that time, that the king having mentioned this affair to the marquis de Louvois, as what was yet undetermined, and desired his opinion, the minister exclaimed, 'ah! Sire, have you well considered what you say to me? Shall the greatest monarch in the world, covered with glory and honour, marry the widow of Scaron?' The king telling him with a smile, that this ardour was unseasonable, Louvois threw himself at his feet, and with great emotion, said, 'Sire, you may deprive me of my fortune, my liberty, my life, yet I must repeat it, your majesty will dishonour yourself by this marriage.'

The king raised him, and said he would consider of it. Sure of the candour of madame de Maintenon, he related this conversation to her; she shewed no resentment, and only answered, 'I told you, Sire, this marriage would be exclaimed against.' Louvois, who was apprehensive that the king would not be
silent

silent upon what had passed, thought he saw in the eyes of madame de Maintenon, and in her cold and ceremonious behaviour, that she deeply resented what in her place, he could not himself have pardoned. He used his utmost endeavours to regain her protection, for which he began to suspect he should have occasion, and probably it was with this view, that a short time afterwards, he undertook to superintend the works carrying on at Maintenon. However the misunderstanding between Louvois and madame de Maintenon had an origin more antient. Louvois was a faithful friend to the marchioness de Montespan, who declared that he answered all her ideas of a great man.

The day was fixed for the ceremony, but madame de Maintenon was seized with a severe indisposition, which obliged the king to delay it. Lewis scarce ever quitted her apartment, and served her with the most tender attention during her illness. Daquin the physician having asked the patient an imprudent question, received orders never more to appear before the king; however he kept his place, but all the duties of it were performed by Fagon, whom the publick, for more than an age, had known to have greater abilities than Daquin, while the king seemed not to have perceived it.

The vigilance of madame de Montespan, and the importunities of the dauphiness, disconcerted the measures they had taken. Father de la Chasse regulated every thing so as to give hopes that the marriage might remain a profound secret.

Here my memoirs have a blank, which may possibly be filled up by some circumstances, related by the late monsieur de la Berchere, archbishop of Narbonne. One day in the winter, said he, Harley, archbishop of Paris, rose very early in the morning, and desired his first almoner to prepare him a green vestment, and mark the mass-book at the article *de matrimoniis*. The archbishop caused the vestment and the mass-book to be put into his coach, and went to the castle of Versailles,

faillies, which he entered with great privacy. Bontems, first groom of the chamber to the king, and the marquis de Montchevreuil were witnesses: the archbishop and the confessor performed the ceremony in the ancient chappel of Versailles. Montchevreuil congratulating madame de Maintenon, added these words, 'It is with infinite pleasure, madam, that I find the respect I have for you cannot be augmented.'

The king went the same day to Marly with a small train: there it was that having asked madame de Maintenon what opera she liked best, and madame de Maintenon declared for *Atys*, the king replied, *Atys is too happy*.

CHAPTER XIX.

Testimonies of the historians to this marriage:

LEWIS the fourteenth has already had seven historians. The abbé de Choisy, the marquis de la Fare, Larrey, Limiers, la Martiniere, Reboulet, and monsieur de Voltaire; each of whom has taken notice of this marriage. To have passed it over in silence, would have been injurious to the memory of that prince, and have left upon him an odious and unjust suspicion of having lived in an open and scandalous commerce with a woman, whom he had long loved in secret, and fixed upon both the eternal reproach, of making a monstrous union of a pious life, and edifying death with an obstinate perseverance in a criminal amour, or what was at least suspected to be so. The panegyrists of Lewis have not praised this alliance, neither have his enemies blamed it: they look upon it to be wholly indifferent to his fame. In effect the sovereign who does an unjust thing despises a law, but the master who marries his servant despises only a prejudice.

The accounts of Limiers and Larrey, foreign writers, who were guided by popular reports, merit but little attention; by one of them madame de Maintenon is

is represented as an ambitious woman, capable of the most daring crimes : the other makes her a young beauty, weak enough to grant the king's favours, yet artful enough to raise herself to the throne by them : a shocking absurdity, for tho' a man of honour, through mistake, may marry the mistress of another, yet what must he be, who marries his own ?

La Fare, the gentlest and most candid of men in conversation, in history the most severe, represents madame de Maintenon as a coquet, who but half delivered herself to the king : who, after the death of mademoiselle Fontanges, purchased an estate, that she might have a convenient name, became a devotee, because she was grown old, through ambition inspired the king with sentiments of piety, which here she affects ; and two lines below, she is said to be probably sincere in, and who persuaded him to marry her to silence, the remorse of his conscience : he does not fix the date of this event.

The abbé de Choisy is more exact ; he places it in the year 1686, and relates all the circumstances like one who was well acquainted with the true character of madame de Maintenon : la Martiniere, and Reboulet, have only copied him. Monsieur de Voltaire, although not very exact in his relations, yet seems to have written this part of his *Siècle* with great care ; he has judiciously refuted some ridiculous tales, either because he was guided by authentic memoirs, or that he made a happy use of his extreme diffidence with regard to public reports. No historian has better described madame de Maintenon, or marked with more exactness the gradation of her fortune ; but he is mistaken when he says * that this marriage was always considered as a problem at court ; for no one doubted it ; that there was no contract : Is it probable then that the parties would not have expressed their mutual consent in writing ? that madame de Maintenon was in her
fifty

* See *Siècle de Louis XIV.* Tom. II. premiere partie, édit de Paris, 1752.

fifty-second year : she was but forty-nine : that the marriage was solemnized in the year 1686. From the beginning of that year, the king had been greatly disordered with a fistula ; it is very unlikely that he should have chosen to marry again, when he was upon the point of going through the most dangerous operation imaginable ; or that he should think of love, when his life was in the utmost danger.

I am therefore of opinion, that this marriage was solemnized towards the end of the year 1685*, the day and the month cannot be determined ; but it is certain, that from that year, she ceased to perform the office of dame d'Autour. Mademoiselle d'Aumale relates that marshal Villerdi told her, the king was married to madame de Maintenon, two years after the death of the queen, which was in 1683. Madame de Maintenon having a little misunderstanding with the dutchess of Burgundy, said to her, ' I was what I am ' before you were born. Now this princess was born December the 6th, 1685. To this we may add, that in the collection of her original letters to the abbé Gobelin, not one is to be found of this year's date ; it is therefore highly probable, that madame de Maintenon desired to have all those, which she had wrote to him upon this great affair, returned to her again.

Those who are for fixing this marriage a year farther back, are refuted by the offer that was then made madame de Maintenon, of the post of lady of honour to the dauphiness : a husband would hardly offer his wife the place of a chamber-maid to his daughter-in-law.

Some say that the marquis de Louvois and the chevalier de Fourbin, were of the number of witnesses, but the former was upon very ill terms with madame de Maintenon, and the latter not intimate enough with

* The death of the queen, says the marquis de Feuquieres, raised her to a height, that no one could have expected.

her for such a trust: besides in affairs that are to be kept secret, confidants are never unnecessarily multiplied.

The act of celebration is not in the archives of the archbishop of Paris, where it ought to have been deposited. Harlay used to carry it always in his pocket, and was so indolent, that whenever he left off his cloaths, he locked them up in a chest, to spare himself the trouble of putting his papers in order. After his death, a great number of old clothes were found carefully locked up, and in the pockets of one of them this act; which after having been the jest of his valets, passed from hand to hand, till it came, perhaps, into the possession of some man, who thought it deserved a place in his cabinet, where it may now be.

CHAPTER XX.

Continuation of the ninth chapter.

WHEN the king returned to Versailles, he gave madame de Maintenon an apartment of distinction near his own: he found it so convenient, that although at first he only designed she should continue in it a few days, till another more magnificent was prepared for her; yet he now desired her to settle in it. She endeavoured to conceal her secret from the astonished court, by causing it to be furnished with great simplicity. The king seeing a large crucifix in one of her rooms, said, 'This is a very grave ornament, I advise you to have it taken away.' 'Ah! replied madame de Maintenon, are you afraid of seeing the image of him whom you are desirous of loving? of him who is now your hope, and in death will be all your support?' 'You preach like an angel,' replied the king; and the crucifix was allowed to remain.

This was a very different picture from one with which madame de Montespan, during her guilty greatness, had adorned a cabinet, which was only open to her chosen friends. The king was there represented at the head of his army, turning his head, and gazing attentively

tively and with a passionate air upon a woman at a distance, who had all the features of madame de Montespan, and naked as the graces : this woman lay carelessly extended upon a bed of flowers, sighing out these tender words ; ‘ Ah ! when will Mars restore him to me and love ? ’

The king, who had lived in a succession of guilty pleasures, poisoned by remorse, and interrupted by cares, began to relish the calm delights of innocent love : he was charmed with the modesty of a woman who shewed as much solicitude to conceal a lawful union, as others carelessness in hiding a criminal engagement. He was now free from that inquietude, that sense of conscious guilt, which never quitted madame de Montespan, and which filled her with such terrors, that she trembled when she was left alone, though but for a moment ; could not sleep without one of her women on each side of her ; was in agonies when she heard of any sudden death ; and if it thundered, always held a young girl close to her breast, either because she thought the innocence and purity of a child would preserve her from the danger, or that her weak mind suggested to her, that heaven might in its rage mistake, and transfix the child instead of her.

It will be easily imagined, that madame de Maintenon was now more followed than before : the whole court was solicitous to please her, and she observed that those who made their court to her, seemed to think they were only doing their duty. Such general respect consoled her a little for the sacrifice of her reputation. She might have taken advantage of this new fervor of adulation, to have exacted those honours that are paid to a queen ; but her soul was even above royalty : besides, madame de Montespan by usurping some, had debased all.

Her old friends congratulated themselves upon her elevation, which by their anticipated respect, it should seem they had foreseen. Barillon, seeing her cross the gallery of Versailles, followed by the whole court, said, ‘ I have been greatly to blame.’

In October the court left Versailles, and went to

Fontainebleau. The dutchess of Bourbon, the princess of Conti, and the duke of Orleans were in the king's coach, but madame de Maintenon was seated next his side. She was lodged in an apartment close to the king's, who, to the great astonishment of the courtiers, passed part of every night with her.

Madame de Montespan came to Fontainebleau with the rest : she was informed of the new observations that had been made : she was told that the king had been seen standing at a window with madame de Maintenon, entertaining her with an easy, familiar air, and expressions of the highest tenderness. ' If they were married, said the marchioness de Montespan, they would not be so fond of each other ; yet it is strange they should allow themselves such liberties.'

The known virtue of the one, excluded all probability of an amour, the haughtiness of the other, made such an alliance be thought impossible. Madame de Montespan explained away facts, which might have convinced her of the truth : she had still some distinction paid her ; and at the intreaty of madame de Maintenon, some evenings were spent in her apartment : no one could fall more imperceptibly.

The king was very desirous that his court should suspect he had married madame de Maintenon, but was not willing to give certain proofs of it. He imagined that the appearance of mystery, would excuse the prodigious disproportion of such a match, and that virtue would justify it. He acted like a prince, whom certain circumstances did not permit to own, and whom conscience forbid to conceal all. The court had a thousand indications of his marriage. Madame de Maintenon, when she went to mass, always sat in one of the little galleries destined for the king and queen : she drest and undrest before the king, who called her Madame, pronounced short, to distinguish her from the dutchess of Orleans, his brother's wife. She went one day to the convent of the Grand Carmelites, which the queens of France are only permitted to enter : the superior met her, and said : ' You know our customs, madame, it is for you to decide.' ' Mother, replied
 ' madame

‘madame de Maintenon, you may always admit me.’

It has been said, but with no probability, that the small number of domesticks who were in the secret, paid her in private those honours, which she did not receive in publick, and even gave her the title of majesty. The abbé de Choisy, in those memoirs, which are accused of containing so many falsehoods, and which have so candid an air, relates a little incident, which, says he, at least forms a presumption. He had dedicated a book to the king, and intreated Bontems to present a copy in his name to madame de Maintenon. Bontems, when he gave him an account of what he said to the lady, made use of these words; *I am persuaded that her ma* he stopped short, blushed for his indiscretion, and changed the discourse: I pretended, adds the abbé de Choisy, that I did not hear these words, and never took any notice of them to him.

The same abbé having dedicated to her his version of the imitation of Jesus Christ, in the frontispiece to the book was a woman resembling madame de Maintenon on her knees before a crucifix, with these words of the psalmist * beneath: *Audi filia mea: Et inclina aurem tuam: Et obliviscere domum patris tui: rex concupiscet decorem tuum. Listen, O daughter! and incline thine ear: forget thy father's house, for the king shall desire thy beauty.*

Lewis gave madame de Maintenon neither rank nor title, because there were none which were not beneath her state. If she had aspired to the throne, she would have been raised to it by degrees; she would have taken the title of some principality or dutchy; she would have lived with splendor, suitable to the dignity of her character; but nothing could be more simple, more free from ostentation, than her house. Our financiers would smile, if I should tell them, that the wife of Lewis XIV. had only a steward, a butler, a cook, three

F 3: foot-

* This frontispiece was not fixed to the second edition.

footmen, two women, a coach-man, a suit of tapestry hangings from the wardrobe of Versailles, and a service of plate of fifteen thousand francs price.

She who had a right to take way of every lady in the court, yielded it to all without exception : the foreign ministers in vain besieged her door, and solicited an audience of her after the royal family, the pope's nuncios, and afterwards the Spanish ambassadors, were alone able to prevail over her humility. She preserved her favour by the same kind of merit, by which she had acquired it, and the equality of her conduct, in situations so different, proved the sincerity of her virtue. How should she aspire to the throne of France, who had refused to accept the post of lady of honour to a dauphiness, because she thought it above her ? Now when she had reached a height which even her wishes durst not grasp at, she behaved as if it was still unattained ; however on some occasions, when the king's orders, an absolute necessity, or probably, a just resentment, obliged her to it, she made the princesses of the blood sensible of the dignity of her character : she was often informed of their railleries, by persons whose trade it is to hear, to repeat, and to exaggerate all. The dutchess of Bourbon, lively, witty, good, but satirical and capricious, made a very severe couplet against her : madame de Maintenon, after reading it, said ; ' Do they take me for the king's mistress ?'

She never discovered her secret, yet never denied her quality. One of her friends saying to her, ' You, ' madame, are not the last in the kingdom.' ' Be silent, she replied, all this is vanity.' A little girl saying, ' I have been assured, madam, that you are a ' queen. Who has told you so ?' was all the answer of madame de Maintenon : another going with her into her coach, cried out, ' I have the honours (one of the honours of the court is the right of sitting in the coach of the king or queen.)' Madame de Maintenon smiled, and laid her fan upon the child's mouth. When any of the country people near Fontainebleau used to address her with the title of majesty, she blushed, saying, ' Must I be flattered then by every one ?'

On

On her birth-day, a wit of those times presented her with a sonnet preceded by this anagram, *queen of France in 168 . . .* which the poet pretended to make out from these two words, *Françoise d'Aubigné*: this little piece I have seen among her papers.

She punished madame d'Heudicourt severely for imprudently saying to her, 'Our husbands will not return soon from hunting.' The babler was excluded some months from her society. The too great caution of marshal de N. . . . has deprived us of a very interesting relation. Madame de Maintenon, who esteemed him greatly for his virtues, was upon the point of telling him her whole secret. The marshal was afraid of such a trust: he knew her weakness of telling every thing to the king, either through habitual ingenuoulness, or to vary the conversation: he was afraid that the king would be displeased that he knew it, and opposed an excess of circumspection to an excess of confidence. 'If I had been willing, said he to a lady as he came away, I might have known all. *

Madame de Caylus has often told mademoiselle d'Aumale, and probably mentioned likewise in her memoirs the following circumstance. Madame de Maintenon, who was excessively fond of her, yet chid her incessantly, closed a severe lecture one day with these words: *You who may make the greatest figure in court: you, to whom I transfer with pleasure the homage that fatigues me.* And observing her unmoved with all this, she added with great emotion, yet lowering her voice, *You who are niece to a queen.* This anecdote has been rejected by some, as being directly opposite to her character. But it would be much more surprising, if in the course of so long a life, no inadvertent expression had betrayed her secret, than that such a one really escaped her.

The king was less reserved. One day when he had taken some medicines, the duke of Orleans came to see him, and found him in bed negligently covered, and madame de Maintenon in the chamber. The

* Manuscript of mademoiselle d'Aumale.

king, vexed that he should be surpris'd in that state, without answering his brother's enquiries concerning his health, said precipitately, 'By the manner in which you see me with madame, you may guess what she is to me.' To reveal a secret to the duke of Orleans, was to declare it publickly.

The dauphiness claimed the right of receiving a foreign queen in a chair of state; 'I am not yet queen of France, said she; but I hold the place of queen.' The king hearing of this claim, replied, 'Not yet, not yet.'

Mignard being employed to draw a picture of madame de Maintenon, painted her in the character of Saint Francis, and asked the king with a smile, if he might not give her a mantle of ermine; 'Yes, said the king, Saint Francis deserves it.'

This picture is the most beautiful of all that was ever done for her. Mignard has made it lovely without flattery: he has given her neither youth, nor bloom, yet without these perfections, says madame de Coulanges to madame de Sevigné, he shews us eyes so animated, such perfect grace, such dignified sweetness, such power of expression in her charming countenance, as exceeds all that the most lively imagination could form. All the courtiers admired this picture, nor did the attribute of royalty escape their observation. It was upon this picture, and one that Mignard drew of the king, that mademoiselle Bernard address'd the following verses to Mignard:

*Oui, votre art, je l'avoue, est au-dessus du mien.
J'ai loué mille fois notre invincible maître:
Mais vous, en deux portraits, vous le faites connoître.*

*On voit aisément dans le sien,
Sa valeur, son cœur magnanime.
Dans l'autre on voit son gout à placer son estime.
Ah! Mignard! que vous louez bien!*

' Your

- ‘ Your art surpasses mine, I own,
- ‘ I’ve oft our matchless master prais’d ;
- ‘ But in two portraits you have shewn,
- ‘ What ne’er my noblest numbers rais’d.
- ‘ His valour *that* and mighty mind,
- ‘ To each enraptur’d eye displays ;
- ‘ His taste *this* and esteem refin’d,
- ‘ How delicate thy pencil’s praise.

ELPHINSTON.

Although a thousand little circumstances, which separately proved nothing, but taken together, explained all, had not informed the court, that Lewis and madame de Maintenon were united by the most sacred ties : yet it could not have been doubted, when on one hand was considered their piety, their extensive charity, their constant practice of all the duties of religion, their aversion to the corrupters of men and the seducers of women ; and on the other, the extreme familiarity between them : madame de Maintenon’s door, shut to all the world after the king had entered. The tender attention of Lewis when she was ill, compliances on her side paid with respect, and veneration on his ; that undisguised pleasure at seeing each other, after a very short absence, that fondness for being together, and all that may be observed in persons whose tenderness is founded on virtue.

CHAPTER XXI.

The different opinions of the public concerning this marriage.

THE public judged differently of this marriage. The princes murmured, the wise praised the king, the women blamed him, and the politicians admired madame de Maintenon.

The great Arnauld, who had so many reasons to complain of Father de la Chaise, but many more to speak truth, was probably the only person who thought just-

ly of the affair. ' Those, says he, who direct the king's conscience, cannot be reproached with having acted wrong upon this occasion. There is no scandal given to the public, since all who observe that there is something more than friendship between the king and madame de Maintenon, believe that they are married. If the confessor was persuaded that he could not live without a woman, was it not his duty to advise him to enter into a lawful engagement, rather than to offend God by criminal amours? I cannot therefore see any thing to be condemned in this marriage, contracted according to the rules of the church: it is only humiliating in the opinions of weak and prejudiced persons, who consider it as an effect of meanness to marry a woman older than himself, and so greatly beneath his rank; yet in reality he did an action agreeable to God, if he looked upon this union as the means of avoiding unlawful passions. By this marriage he acquired a right to the affections of a woman, whose understanding and virtue he esteemed, and in whose conversation he finds innocent pleasures, which relieve him after the fatigue of great affairs. Would to God that the directors of his conscience had never given him any worse advice *.'

This marriage was neither disgraceful nor ridiculous; the disproportion of their ages was not so great: madame de Maintenon was but three years older than the king. Pleasure had advanced the age of the king, virtue had preserved the youth of madame de Maintenon. History affords us instances of a hundred passions more surprising, if at present any thing would give surprise. Cleopatra was old when she enslaved Antony: Henry the second, languished for his father's mistress, and preferred the wrinkles of the dutchess de Valentinois, to the roses and lilies of the most lovely princess in the world. ' If I was young, said a coquet to a prince, you should see me at your feet; I am old, and you must now kneel to me.'

If

* Letter to monsieur de Vaucel, June 3d, 1688.

If coquetry has its arts, and wisdom its address; one has the talent of pleasing, the other has the power of charming. By that madame de Maintenon fixed the most sensual and most inconstant prince in the world: after his marriage no other woman ever attracted his eyes, or raised a wandering desire; and that heart so volatile, so often attacked, never gave the least cause of suspicion to the most jealous wife in the world. Madame de Maintenon had doubtless charms enough at forty-nine, to awake a passion in a libertine, since at seventy she still inspired desires. Lewis had reason to apprehend, that long repentance would succeed the short transports of such a union; but she was always attractive, he was always passionate. In 1705, we see her solicited by the king, ashamed of being so, and yielding to his wishes, at the command of her bishop. At an age when passion dies in us, the graces still live: continence was in her a virtue. She saw herself consuming in a gradual decay, yet still beheld with passionate desire, and when reduced almost to a shadow, still lovely and still adored. I shall suppress details unworthy of the dignity of history. But be this marriage no more thought surprising; who better than the lover knows whom he ought to love?

A prince should not be restrained by inequality of rank, who accustomed to think every thing depending on himself, sees nor acknowledges no grandeur but what proceeds from him: love and virtue reduce all to an equality, and fill up the immense space between the master and the slave. When a woman is beloved by her king, deserves to be so, and is too good to be his mistress, the quality of subject makes her only more worthy to be his wife.

Madame de Maintenon's surprising elevation is still exclaimed against by us, as if there had not been more wonderful changes of fortune. The annals of the world are full of them. Charlemaign had two wives, neither of whom were descended more nobly than Frances d'Aubigné, and who were not declared empresses. Louisa of Savoy, mother of Francis the first, marri-

married Rabaudange *, her maître-d'hôtel, who was her servant in the day, at night her tyrant. Mary Stuart did not blush to become the wife of a nobleman, after having been queen of France; and Henry the eighth was not blamed for marrying Anne Bullen, but for beheading her. Without looking so far back, the age of Lewis the fourteenth affords us instances of marriages which justify his. In Denmark, Christiern the fourth publickly married Christiana Monck, whom he created dutchess of Holstein; and Frederick the fourth married mademoiselle de Revénclau, and declared her queen, although he had two children by her before his marriage. In England, the marriage of the duke of York, brother to Charles the second, with the daughter of chancellor Hyde, occasioned no astonishment. In Piedmont, Victor-Amadeus did not disdain to give his hand to the marchioness de Sebastian. In Russia, Peter the first, after raising Catharine to the throne, who was the daughter of a priest, and the widow of a drummer, bequeathed her the empire at his death. Peter the great, and Lewis the great, married their subjects, because they saw none more worthy of them. But the Russian acted like a Frenchman, and the Frenchman like a Russian. The former despised the weak prejudices of mankind, and nobly owned his choice; the latter enslaved by ridiculous custom, and false decorum, dared not to avow his. In this instance, Peter the first seems as greatly superior to Lewis the fourteenth, as madame de Maintenon to the empress Catharine.

The nations of Europe give sovereigns reciprocally to each other, these very seldom acquire the love of the people they govern, because they cannot adopt their manners. Such alliances in former times united princes in the strictest friendship: at present they form ties which are easily broken: contiguity ends where

* This family is still subsisting in Normany; and if we may believe Brantôme, disc. iv. art. 111. of the love of widows, the present race of Rabaudange are descended from this marriage.

the diversity of interests begins: Why then should monarchs seek in foreign countries what they so rarely find, and what their own can furnish them with? Ever since Europe has been divided into catholick and protestant states, they have been deprived of the liberty of choice, and have been obliged to receive a wife from the hands of chance: old, ugly, foolish, or wicked, those whom they cannot love, they are tied to for life. Hence so few happy marriages, hence such degenerate races. Among so many subjects, distinguished for their birth, their beauty, and wit, they might find wives worthy of their affection. It is easy to be happy, it is difficult to dare to be so. Lewis the fourteenth did not hesitate long; instead of a foreign princess, whom he must study to please, he chose a woman in his own kingdom, who made it her whole endeavour to please him, the only one who could inspire him with a lasting passion, and so revered, that in the admiration which the recital of her virtues occasioned, he cried, *let us go and shut ourselves up to talk of this woman.*

CHAPTER XXII.

Operation of the fistula. The marchioness de Montespan leaves the court.

1686.] **M**ADAME de Maintenon discovered none of that triumph, that conscious satisfaction which is imprest on the countenance of a declared favourite. And how, indeed, should she, since a few days familiarized her to her good fortune, and made it tasteless? This she owned herself, in the ardour of confidence, to one of her friends, 'I was born ambitious, says she: I struggled against this prevailing passion: when my highest wishes were granted, I thought myself supremely happy, but this intoxication lasted only three weeks.'

Her peculiar turn of mind rendered her incapable of happiness. She had so lively a sense of all the inconveniences of her station, that she despised the advantages of it, and to complete her misery, she saw that this station which prudence had made mysterious, might

might soon become uncertain by the death of the king. That prince seemed to enjoy a perfect health, he walked in his gardens, he affected his usual gaiety, yet he languished with a painful disorder; he had for some time been afflicted with a fistula, and the remedies prescribed by his physicians, rather assuaging the pain than making any progress towards a cure, the distemper grew violent, and he was no longer able to mount his horse without great pain, or to continue sitting for any considerable time. Having resolved to try the baths of Barege, and to begin his journey towards Whitsuntide; he named the persons who were to be with him in his coach, and these were the Dauphin, the duke of Orleans, the dutchess of Bourbon, the princess of Conti, and madame de Maintenon. At the same time he gave notice to the marchioness de Montespan, that she must not expect to attend him to Barege. This news gave her dreadful vapours; how should she support so open a preference of a person she still thought beneath her, and whom the king had raised so greatly above her?

Her rage no longer knew any bounds, when she heard her sentence from a mouth that was now become odious to her. Madame de Maintenon was ordered by the king to signify to her in express terms, that he was determined to break off all connexion with her, and would confine her to Paris, if she continued to importune him with her ridiculous claims.

This was a dreadful message; madame de Maintenon was the only person who would have been willing to deliver it; but she had no reason to fear the reproaches of a woman, whose conduct had been so different from hers. Secure of supporting her rights with the same calm steadiness with which she had maintained those of virtue, she flattered herself that she should pronounce with more softness than any other, a decree so favourable to her, so cruel to the unhappy marchioness de Montespan; but in vain she spoke to her in the gentlest manner, with apparent disinterestedness and soothing compassion: madame de Montespan was wild with rage and grief, 'Ah! cried she,

if

‘ if I could have believed this, fourteen years ago,
‘ you should not have had it in your power to torment
‘ me thus to-day.’

In the excess of her despair she demanded her children, that she might tear them in pieces; then flew to the community of saint Joseph, to give free vent to her sorrow. She afterwards sent for madame de Miramion, the most famous devotee of the age, eager to prove if a conversation wholly divine could make her forget the most lovely of mortals. ‘ Alas! madam,’ said she, embracing her, he treats me like the most abandoned of creatures, and yet heaven is my witness, since the birth of the count de Toulouse, he has never received the least favour from me.’

The devotee crossed herself three or four times, to expiate this confidence, and preached a long sermon to the afflicted mistress, to shew her the favourable designs of a sanctifying God, in the cruel ties of a faithless lover.

The next day, without taking her leave of the king or of any other person, she set out for Ran bouillet. The king permitted mademoiselle de Blois to follow her, but expressly forbid the count de Toulouse. However, a few days after, finding himself much better, and even able to pursue his favourite diversion, hunting, he declared he would not go to Barege, and had the goodness or the weakness to send for madame de Montespan, who came instantly back to Versailles, transported with joy; received the compliments of the court upon her return, and attributed to reviving love what was only the effect of compassion. She now entertained hopes of regaining a heart which had once glowed with the most ardent passion for her, and which still retained so tender a respect for her: but her influence daily lessening for so long a time, all was languor and indifference on one side; and on the other, pining discontent, and sudden sallies of rage. Although madame de Maintenon had not possessed the first place, madame de Montespan would never have recovered hers.

As soon as she arrived at Versailles, the king went to her apartment and continued to visit her in his way to mass; but he staid only a moment with her, and was always followed by his attendants, lest the world should suspect that he was going to resume those chains which had so long been broke.

Madame de Maintenon seldom saw her. The marchioness would always insist upon coming to an explanation upon every imagined mistake. She once, after a very spirited conversation, said to her, 'I know how to revenge myself.' 'And I, replied madame de Maintenon, know how to pardon you.'

The marchioness often proposed to madame de Maintenon a party to Clagny, and she always accepted it. One day when they had resolved to go together, madame de Maintenon was advised to break the appointment. 'You are not safe there, said this officious friend, this entertainment that is prepared for you, may cover some treachery, madame de Montespan's friendship seems too violent to be sincere, and if it is dissembled, it is dangerous.' Madame de Maintenon had promised, and was resolved to keep her word: she went, and was convinced, that it was easier to imagine a crime than to execute it.

The marchioness excluded from love, from power, from pleasure, devoured by ambition, tormented with jealousy, sent back to the king all the jewels he had presented her with. The king made a motion to open the casket, but was prevented by madame de Maintenon, who was afraid of being affronted with the offer of them. He seemed resolved to punish her for the insult, but madame de Maintenon represented to him, that the marchioness was more worthy of compassion than resentment, and that this imprudent sally of rage was the last effort of a passion reduced to despair. Superior to all that could be said of her, conscious of all that madame de Montespan could think, she would have been rejoiced that Lewis had banished her from the court, to which she still gave scandal, but she was not willing that what ought to be the work of repen-

repentance and returning virtue, should be the effect of disgust and resentment.

Mean time experiments were made in secret in an operation to which the king was determined to submit. Several persons labouring under the same disease were carried to the marquis de Louvois's hôtel, upon whom Felix the king's first surgeon exercised his hand in the presence of Fagon his physician. Most of the unhappy creatures died, they were interred with great secrecy; but notwithstanding all the precautions that were used, dead bodies were frequently seen brought out of the hôtel de Louvois. Suddenly a report was spread over the whole city, that a conspiracy against the king had been discovered, that the minister interrogated the criminals, and put them to death, either by poison or the torture. Terror and amazement filled the minds of the people, each trembling lest he should be seized, and carried before the stern Louvois, asked himself, if he was innocent, if he had no connexion with any criminal. No one approached the minister without terror, or ventured to speak of state affairs; each feared an informer in his most faithful friend.

These unfortunate experiments were concealed from the king, but Fagon could not help acquainting madame de Maintenon, who fluctuated between the fear of killing the king by the operation, if she did not inform him, and by the disease if she did. Whenever she heard of any fatal experiment, her heart sunk with terror; her imagination continually represented to her the king expiring before her eyes in the arms of his physicians, ere half his race was finished, and at the moment when his life was most necessary, and was likely to be most glorious.

Tortured with these mournful images, she received with indignation a dominican, who earnestly intreated her to procure him a moment's audience of the king. Nothing dulls the apprehension so much as fear and anxiety, she instantly recollected brother Clement: this monk was an empirick who pretended to have discovered a specifick against Fistulas. This
was

was an injection of water, which was found to be only prepared vitriol.

Felix invented new instruments, and at last made some successful experiments in the hospital of invalids. The king upon the report of Louvois, and the advice of Fagon, told the first surgeon, that he would abandon himself wholly to his skill.

On the day fixed for the operation, the first physician, the first surgeon, Father de la Chaise, Louvois, and madame de Maintenon, came with great secrecy into the king's apartment; sadness and fear were impressed on every countenance. The king alone with a calm and serene air said to Felix, 'Make as many incisions as you shall judge necessary, but finish the operation at once.' Felix now ready to lay his hands upon his prince, represented to himself the several accidents that might happen, the cry that would be raised against him if the king should die, the bitter regret he should feel for it to the end of his life; and his blood froze in his veins. Fagon gave him a look that reassured him. The confessor raised his eyes to heaven. Louvois reflecting on all the consequences of this dangerous secret remained immovable at the bedside. Already he thought that France and the dauphin demanded of him the king and the father, and made him accountable for his life. Madame de Maintenon in agonizing terrors felt herself pierced with every stroke given to the king. All trembled, yet all concealed their fears, lest they should alarm the patient, who with his eyes demanded of the faithful Bontems, if there was any danger.

Felix made an effort upon himself, and resuming all his courage, cut with a pitiless, yet friendly hand, to the last roots of the disease. All who were present groaned; madame de Maintenon uttered a loud cry; the king struggled against pain, and suffered not a sigh to escape him.

At eight o'clock in the morning the doors were opened: the whole court was informed that a great operation had been performed on the king, and no person

son yet knew what it was. The dauphin flew with eager haste to the king's apartment; he entered bathed in tears, threw himself prostrate at the feet of the bed, saw madame de Maintenon at the head, and thanked her for having preserved his father.

At this unexpected news the marchioness de Montespan came in great haste to the king's apartment: the door-keeper who had his orders, told her she must not enter: madame de Montespan with that imperious air, which long domination always leaves, insisted upon being admitted: the door-keeper as resolutely refused. She learned that madame de Maintenon was with the king, and retiring precipitately, filled the antechamber with tears and groans, which neither proved, or deceived any who were present.

The same day Lewis gave audience to the ambassadors, and held a council with his ministers: the man suffered, but the king was well.

Felix was magnificently rewarded, but his imagination had been so forcibly struck with the king's danger, he had made so violent an effort upon himself, that he was seized with a tremor which never quitted him during the rest of his life: the day after he had saved the king, he maimed his most valuable friend * in bleeding him.

Madame de Maintenon continued a month longer, in the most dreadful anxiety: the wound was opened, new incisions were made, the physicians varied in their opinions and advice, and even the gentlest was cruel. 'Sire, said she, one day to the king, you have suffered a great deal. Yes, replied the king, in seeing you suffer.' During the course of his illness he saw so much real tenderness in her, such extreme attention in serving him, that he no longer doubted his having found a woman who was more attached to his person than his grandeur.

When he was a little recovered, he languished for some amusement; he used to spend an hour every afternoon

* The sieur de Niert first groom of the chamber.
Manuscripts of the bishop of Agen.

ternoon in examining his cabinet of medals with father de la Chaise, who understood them perfectly, and who had no reason to repent his explanations of them: madame de Maintenon observing the king meditating upon an Augustus Cæsar, said to him, ' You look too long upon yourself.'

Racine and Boileau were sent for to read to the king some parts of his history. They were extremely surprised to see madame de Maintenon, who they supposed was dismissed, seated in a chair of state, close by the bed of the king, who talked to her familiarly, while she answered with an easy air, like a person who was at home. To sooth madame de Montespan, to deceive her, or to flatter her pride, the king admitted her to these assemblies, it was she who had suggested to him the design of having his history written by Racine and Boileau, who shewed greater application to seclude other men of letters from the court, and to make themselves masters of the academy, than to produce a work worthy of posterity: for what must that history be, that could be read to him who was the subject of it? While Racine read, and Lewis enjoyed while living the fame he would have after death, madame de Montespan threw out some satirical expressions. The king smiled at them, and slyly looked upon madame de Maintenon, who, seated on a stool opposite to him, endeavoured to listen without yawning to the flatteries of the two historians.

Boileau has related to his friends, that one day when he had just begun to read to the king, the marchioness de Montespan who was not expected, came in; madame de Maintenon did not rise at her entrance, but the king desired the marchioness to sit down, adding, ' It is but just, madam, that you should hear a work, the plan of which was traced by yourself.' Madame de Montespan appeared very inattentive, and interrupted the reader frequently, to say to madame de Maintenon, ' Does this passage please you, madam?' When the reading was over, she courtesied profoundly low to madame de Maintenon, with an air more satirical.

rical than respectful, and desired she would give her an opportunity to speak to her in private, having a great many things to say to her. 'I have business at present,' replied madame de Maintenon coolly, when 'I am at leisure I will let you know.' This was the only time she ever made madame de Montespan sensible of her superiority, who had so often overwhelmed her with hers. She no otherwise repaid her insults than by inattention, by kindness, or disdain.

She was so sure of the king's affection, that she was not afraid to let him see daily a woman once passionately beloved by him, and still lovely. Any other would have required the banishment of the marchioness, but madame de Maintenon, satisfied with having put Lewis in a state not to fear her, did not even think the presence of her enemy troublesome. *By engaging him to think of eternity, she had acquired an ascendant so much the stronger, as human interests had no part in it.*

This testimony to her honour is given by the abbé de Choisy, who makes her eulogium a thousand times in those very memoirs which are accused of being so severe.

She left to Hebert rector of Versailles, and to father de la Chaïse the care of deciding, whether madame de Montespan ought to be banished from court, or allowed to remain there still. Hebert, a troublesome devotee, a rigid priest, an imprudent courtier, a spy upon all his friends, could not without deep regret see madame de Montespan in his parish. Father de la Chaïse, who had as much rectitude and more moderation, was of opinion, that since the crime had ceased, nothing more was to be feared. The rector either stimulated by zeal, or because he flattered himself he should please madame de Maintenon, told her, that in the provinces, and in Paris itself, there were many persons, who could not be persuaded that this scandalous commerce was broke, while madame de Montespan was seen at court. He represented to her, that the king was in danger while the object of a guilty passion was always before his eyes, that hearts however fortified

fortified with pious resolutions yet may yield to the snares which the remembrance of past pleasures lays for them. 'I am persuaded of the reasonableness of all you have said, replied madame de Maintenon, and I doubt not but the king will be easily brought to think as I do, but father de la Chaise is of another opinion.'

The rector replied, that the confessors of private persons obliged them to separate from the women with whom they had sinned, that this was the arm which must be cut off, this the eye that must be pulled out; and that the consciences of kings were regulated by the same rules as those of their subjects. These reasons were equally strong for banishing the children as well as the mother. 'I am convinced, replied madame de Maintenon, that all you have said is just, and I sincerely wish matters were ordered otherwise.'

Her wishes were soon granted, madame de Montespan no longer appeared at court. After having had the most extensive influence, after having acted the part of a prude, a coquet, a devotee, she reduced herself to nothing, when all the ties that held her to the court were broken. She had suffered some mortifications: but why was she not a more affectionate mother? she would have thought them all compensated by the immense fortunes that were given to her children, and the illustrious rank they were in at court.

Her banishment did not embroil madame de Maintenon with the family of Mortemar. The abbess of Fontevault, who knew all her proceedings, might hate her perhaps, yet could not help esteeming her so much, that she boasted of being her friend. The family of Thianges through her applied with confidence to the king. Madame de Rochechouart did not disdain to be her pensioner: the marquis d'Antin was one of her favourites: and the duke de Vivonne frequently said, 'There is between madame de Maintenon and my sister, as great a distance, as between her brother and myself.'

The marchioness de Montespan was fond of talking of madame de Maintenon, and never mentioned her

her with disrespect. It was to her she owed a pension of twenty four thousand Louis d'ors a year, which the king settled on her when she retired to Paris. While the court staid at Marly, she used to pass some days at her house of Clagny ; and when the king set out for Fontainebleau, she went to Peter-Bourg, where from an alley in the garden she could still see the king without been seen. She lived in Paris with great œconomy, and was but little respected : she always avoided the society of women whose characters had been irreproachable, and solicited that of coquets, whom age had brought back to devotion : she was never satisfied with amassing riches, never took any part in the affairs of her children, and was always apprehensive of being robbed. How different the wife and the mistress ! there immense riches and insatiable avarice were joined, here a moderate income and a boundless generosity. While madame de Montespan enjoyed the reward of her frailty, madame de Maintenon had only a pension of forty eight thousand livres, and would not permit the king to make any addition to it. She often used to say, ' His mistresses cost him more in one month, than I do in a year.'

CHAPTER XXIII.

The countess de Caylus.

MADAME de Maintenon never quitted that moderation which she had prescribed to herself ; she was so far from making her enemies feel the weight of her power, that it was not her fault that they believed she was possessed of any. The favourites of kings are wholly employed in augmenting their influence ; madame de Maintenon laboured to conceal hers : she had none of that ostentation which gives lustre to power, that artifice which secures it, and that vanity of giving away employments, which makes friends. Her disinterestedness was so great, that in her it was scarcely a virtue. ' You enjoy your moderation,

on, said madame de Caylus to her, and your family is the victim of it.'

She loved the count d'Aubigné her brother with great tenderness, but she could not acquire his affection. D'Aubigné asked for every thing, and madame de Maintenon solicited for nothing: he revenged himself by giving her every day new mortifications. After an absence of five years he appeared again at Versailles, surpassed all the courtiers in grandeur, made a short visit to his sister, disappeared without taking leave of her, and went to Paris to display in publick places the airs of a subaltern favourite, or to resign himself in suspected houses to the lavish expences of of obscure luxury. He affected to converse with the malecontents, to exclaim against the ministers, and to prefer the society of Montespan and Lauzun to that of any other. He said to a person who intreated his interest, 'Do not own that you know me, for I am the worst company in Paris.'

However he still felt the effects of the king's friendship for his sister. He was made lieutenant-general, tho' he had no claim to so high a post in the army from his seniority: he had the government of Berry, although it was solicited by noblemen whose services better deserved it. Madame de Maintenon grew at length weary of giving to a man whose prodigality knew no bounds, and who was indigent and distressed with a hundred thousand livres a year.* D'Aubigné asked for the chief command of the army: Madame de Maintenon was the only one who thought this claim ridiculous, and gave him an answer, which for its magnanimity would in this age be called ridiculous likewise.

Mademoiselle de Murçay, the daughter of monsieur de Villette, and consequently niece to madame de Maintenon, according to the custom of Brittany, possessed every thing that could promise her a great establishment

* The author of the age of Lewis XIV. says, that she gave him some secret grants upon the farms, but he was ill informed.

blishment; an interest so powerful that it was deemed equal to the largest fortune, the sprightliness of youth, the allurements of beauty, and the charms of wit. It was not possible for languor to approach her, all was delightful hurry, all pleasing solicitude. Her presence diffused joy where-ever she came, the sweetest tuned instrument was harsh to the enchanting sound of her voice in declamation. She would have been absolutely perfect, if her shape had been more free and her air less studied, and if her extreme gaiety had not given her an air of coquetry, which her aunt and time corrected rather too late.

The count de Caylus married her, with her claims which were nothing, her hopes which were not more, but which were valued at a high rate, and a pension which was indeed a trifle. The king made him *menin** to the dauphin, and presented the bride on her nuptial day with a necklace of pearls worth ten thousand crowns. The courtiers were greatly surprised, that madame de Maintenon should not have married more advantageously a niece so lovely, and so tenderly beloved. They had reason to be more so at the denial she gave Boufflers, a man whose virtue charmed her, whose ambition prompted him to the noblest actions, and made him resolve to raise himself or perish. Boufflers despising the reports of calumny, which accused mademoiselle de Murçay of being capable of the weaknesses of love, although in reality she loved nothing but perfumes, had demanded her in marriage, and had this answer from madame de Maintenon, worthy, says the abbé de Choisy, of being engraved in letters of gold: ' Monsieur, my niece is not a match great enough for you. However I am extremely sensible
' of

* This term the French have borrowed from the Spaniards: the Spanish princes have always a certain number of young boys of quality, who are brought up with them, and called *menins* or favourites, and some of them have pensions; the queen of Spain has also her *menin*.

‘ of the honour you designed me : I will not give her
‘ to you, but I will for the future look upon you as my
‘ nephew.’

This alliance by adoption was of great use to him ; his fortune was rapid : three months afterwards he had the government of Luxembourg, the post of colonel-general of dragoons, notwithstanding the opposition made by Louvois, who solicited it for Tilladet his cousin-german, the rank of lieutenant-general by a particular promotion, the government of Metz, without having asked for it, and every opportunity to display those abilities, which madame de Maintenon had discovered in him.

The countess de Caylus did not please the king at first, he thought her affected, and a coquet ; madame de Maintenon accustomed him to her gaiety, and he began to think it less exceptionable. She was twice banished to Paris, on account of some little errors in her conduct : the first banishment continued a long time, because when she received the order, she said, ‘ The court is so dull, that it is banishment to live ‘ here.’ And in effect instead of a melancholy party at piquet, which she used to have at Versailles, in Paris she had the most brilliant society, la Fare to whom love *promised a look from Caylus* to cure all his ills, the abbé de Rohan, young, amorous, who neglected neither fortune nor pleasures, Villeroi at first called the charming, afterwards the haughty Villeroi, who behaved with such levity to women, and who to his attendants said with such arrogance, *have they put any gold in my pocket ?* the second banishment of madame de Caylus, ended with a retreat of eight days among the Carmelites ; madame de Maintenon went to fetch her from the convent, and brought her back to court, a devotee, reconciled to God, and to her. Their friendship was after this sometimes interrupted, but a great fund of mutual esteem, the necessity for a confidant on madame de Maintenon’s side, the attraction of greatness on that of madame de Caylus, soon dissipated these little storms. The countess would often offend her, but always sure of obtaining her pardon, she

she had nothing to struggle with, but that false pride which sought to retain her in error. Her mind was light, airy, volatile; her heart steady in virtue. She was a calvinist, a quietest, a jansenist, and deist by turns; she wandered from one opinion to another, and at length returned to that which fixes them all by a blind and credulous faith. She had not escaped the tyranny of love; she had a taste for wit, an inclination to intrigue and devotion; she concluded all by a uniform life of virtue. Those who affirm that she hated her aunt, notwithstanding all those instances of tenderness which she received from her, are refuted by the collection of their letters, and by the memoirs of madame de Caylus, which breathe nothing but their mutual esteem and confidence. Probably she was a little disgusted with madame de Maintenon, for an establishment so far below her expectations, but she who had the care of her youth endeavoured to inspire her with her own moderation. Her marriage might have been more illustrious, but it could not have been more happy, since it has given to arts, to letters, to society, the count de Caylus.

The marquis de Murçay fell in love with mademoiselle de Boisfranc. Her father had been superintendent of the household of the duke of Orleans, but was dismissed by him upon some disgust. Mademoiselle de Boisfranc had refused the duke de Roquelaure, and now despised monsieur de Murçay, because she had an immense fortune. Madame de Maintenon could not be prevailed upon to take any step in favour of the lover. Father de la Chaise less scrupulous, undertook the affair and succeeded. The king gave the marquis the command of a troop of horse, and his brother the queen's regiment of dragoons. Madame de Maintenon neither requested nor hoped * for such favours. The chevalier de Murçay signalized himself in the battle of Anguyen, and died of the wounds he received there.

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* Memoirs of the marquis de Dangeau.

The marquis de Villette, their father, was reduced to some pensions given in consideration of his long services. In every promotion that was made the public named him a marshal of France, and the marine earnestly demanded him, yet he remained without preferment, notwithstanding his just claim to it. The family of Saint Hermines, numerous enough to invade every thing, were removed from all, and the countess de Mailly died poor.

Madame de Maintenon only shewed this moderation; when herself or her relations were concerned; it was almost a misfortune to be too nearly allied to her. She married advantageously mademoiselle de Leuwestein, of the house of Bavaria, who took the titles in the act of celebration, which so enraged the dauphiness, that she caused the register of the parish of Versailles to be brought to her, and tore it in pieces, exclaiming against the servile complaisance of the rector and the insolence of madame de Dangeau. She made the fortune of mademoiselle de Rambures, whom she did not love, and married the marquis d'Antin to mademoiselle d'Uzés, through the ascendant she had over the misanthrope Montauzier, and seized the moment, when madame de Montespan was fallen, to raise the son.

In her elevation she forgot not her friends. The marquis de Dangeau had all that a courtier could wish for, a large revenue, a considerable employment, great influence, and various pleasures. Barillon, who had been ambassador to England, and was in danger of being disgraced, she protected from his enemies, and afforded him the means of passing in tranquillity, an agreeable old age. Mademoiselle de Scuderi had a pension of two thousand livres: Deshoulières, very considerable gratuities: the abbé Tetu several sinecures: Racine and Despréaux the salaries and titles of posts without the business: Vardes and Bussi were recalled from exile: the marquis de Montchevreuil was made governor of the duke du Maine and of Saint Germain, and in such high esteem at court, that the king used to say, *If I was not Bourbon, I could wish*

'to be Montchevreuil'. All the courtiers, added he, solicit incessantly for favours, Montchevreuil alone never asks me for any thing.' In effect he never complained that he had not, during ten years, received a penny of a pension of ten thousand livres. After the death of the count de Mornay his son, the king carried him into his closet, and intreated him to tell him in what situation his family was left. Adding, 'Do not you consider me as your master, but speak to me as your friend.' Madame de Maintenon often said, 'Of all those whom I have placed at court, Montchevreuil alone has succeeded.' However, he was certainly a man of an antiquated virtue.

No one ever repented of having known, loved, or served her: a glorious testimony to the honour of a woman, who possessed so high a degree of favour, and so long possessed it. If some of her insatiable friends murmured at the few benefits they received, no citizen complained of having suffered any injury from her; and even at that very time, when she was accused of having thrown the state into confusion by her counsels, no Frenchman ever charged her with indulging private resentment, or countenancing open violence.

In others she required the same disinterestedness she practised herself. The king often said to her, 'Why, madame, do you not ask something of me? you only have nothing.' 'Sire, she replied, you make it unnecessary for me to ask.' This is what her grasping family called a mean complaisance, but the people admired a favourite, who was disinterested enough to be disliked by her relations, and whom the nobility adored as their benefactress and support.

Saint

• *Memoirs of the marquis de Dangeau.*

Saint Cyr.

MADAME de Maintenon often used to say, 'I am thought to be the ablest woman in the world, that with my head upon my pillow I have contrived, conducted, and finished the noble establishment of Saint Cyr. However this community is neither the plan of a single day, nor the production of a single brain: opportunities of relieving the distressed frequently offered, and I gladly embraced them: I pursued this inclination, without pretending to any thing more than occasional charities; my design was insensibly strengthened and extended by the first success, one idea led to another, one good action produced a better; and some benefactions, which were likely to die with me, have formed an establishment which will end only with this empire.

It is this train of ideas, and this progressive scheme that I am now going to unfold. Those who love the publick good, will readily pardon me, in giving a minute description of a benefaction which may be imitated.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Madame de Maintenon's charitable inclinations.

MADAME de Maintenon was always extremely fond of children, and had a particular talent for educating them: she was never without some young girls in her house, whom she delighted in her leisure moments to instruct. She had formed the duke du Maine, who began to fulfil all the hopes that had been conceived of him: mademoiselle de Nantes, whose very faults were pleasing: madame de Montgon, who at eight years of age, said madame de Sevigné, knew the court better than the oldest and most experienced courtiers: and afterwards madame de Caylus, whose memoirs, which are soon to be published, will praise her more than all my eulogiums: the marchioness

ones d'Havrincourt, the ornament of Cambresis and Artois: madame d'Haussey, whom she qualified for the education of princes: the dutchess of Burgundy, who was too soon snatched from us: and the lady of marshal de Noailles, whom it is sufficient to name.

As soon as the first rays of sovereign favour shone upon and distinguished her, she conceived the design of some establishment in favour of girls of condition that were born to no fortunes. The situation she had formerly been in herself, made her eagerly seek the means of relieving them, and inspired her with a resolution to free them from a state more dangerous to virtue, than humiliating to birth.

Every day she acknowledged the benefits she received from God, by sharing them with persons who like her knew the distresses of a laborious youth: 'My situation said she, is disagreeable on all sides, but it has afforded me the pleasure of giving.'

She was moved to the tenderest compassion at the sight of any unfortunate family: the poverty of others became in a manner personal. To excite her compassion, there was no necessity for her visiting the sad retreats of bashful indigence, she needed only to recal to her remembrance the distresses of her youth.

In present grandeur we often recollect past poverty, only to use means to make others forget it. Madame de Maintenon always remembered hers, and remembered it, only that she might be the more charitable. It is the natural consequence of great power and riches, to harden the hearts of those whom providence has raised to them. Madame de Maintenon looked upon her elevation as a burden which the practice of benevolence could alone enable her to bear. 'I would,' said she one day, 'I would relieve all the distressed nobility of the kingdom.' A project impossible to be executed, yet it shewed the greatness of her mind, and the fervor of her charity. In her it was not a wandering emotion, but a sentiment deeply impressed, a sentiment she had from nature, and which religion

sanctified : To relieve the miserable, said she, it is not necessary to be a christian.'

CHAPTER XXV.

Ruel.

THE castle of Maintenon may be called the cradle of Saint Cyr: and madame de Brinon there first displayed a zeal which sought only to produce itself, and which thirsted after riches only to be bountiful. Madame de Brinon was an ursuline nun, who wandered from cloister to cloister, involved in the ruin of her convent. She was the daughter of a president of the parliament of Normandy: her mother received her again into her house, and took her with her to Montchevreuil, where madame de Maintenon became acquainted with her. She was charmed with the fortitude of the nun, who, tho' in the world, resolved to acquit herself of all the duties of a state which she had embraced only in compliance with the will of her parents. To perform her vow of instructing the young and the ignorant, she assembled at Montchevreuil all the domestics and the children in that neighbourhood, and taught them the elements of the christian doctrine. Madame de Maintenon contracted a strict friendship with a woman so much the more estimable, as she had all the spirit of her profession without having a taste for it.

Madame de Brinon lost her mother, and with her all her support. She then associated herself with madame de Saint Pierre, the companion of her misfortunes. One convent received them both, till the debts which had forced them from the first, obliged them to leave the second also.

1680.] They afterwards hired a house in Auvers, and received pensioners there: from thence pressed by their necessities, they went to Montmorency, where the same poverty pursued them.

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At length they determined to have recourse to madame de Maintenon, through a hope that prosperity had not rendered her inaccessible to pity. The court was then at Saint Germain, and madame de Maintenon was then with the king. She quitted all to receive them, and sent them away full of pleasing expectation, gratitude and reverence. Madame de Maintenon went several times to see them in private, and becoming a near witness of their indigence and capacity, she resolved to relieve the one, and employ the other, by bringing this little community home to her.

1682.] In order to afford them present assistance, part of those pensioners which she had in different places, she settled at Ruel, in a convenient house which she furnished for them herself. She there increased the number of her adopted daughters to sixty, and gave them teachers, to relieve madame de Brinon of some part of her labour, and permitted her to send for madame du Basques and madame d'Angiens from the same order, and the same ruined convent.

The number of pensioners increased every day: they had already a hundred, and the court did not know that there was one: with such secrecy and prudence did madame de Maintenon conduct her charities.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Noisy.

MADAME de Maintenon now went often to Ruel, to observe what progress the children made in their education, and took delight to catechise them herself. 'How impatient am I, writes she to madame de Brinon, to be in that house which I love so much!' Her visits became more frequent, and more inconvenient on account of the extreme restraint her situation laid her under. The first success induced her to bring still nearer to her a school for which her affection was increasing every day.

A favourable opportunity offered. The inclosing of the little park of Versailles, and the enlargement of the other, made several fine houses which the king had purchased of the proprietors wholly useless. Madame de Maintenon asked for one of them : the king offered her Noisy, a house that had been built by monsieur de Gondy, and was inclosed in the little park. Madame de Maintenon, who had not carried her views so high, told him that the smallest farm there, would be sufficient for the use she designed it. The king, as emulous of the charity, as charmed with the benevolent disposition of madame de Maintenon, insisted upon her accepting Noisy ; and even told her, that to preserve the building, it was necessary that it should be inhabited. He gave orders immediately for the necessary repairs, which 10000 crowns compleated in four months. The house was very convenient, its situation healthy ; water only was wanting. The day after Candlemas was fixed for the translation.

The girls were divided into four classes, and each class was distinguished by the colour of the ribbon with which their caps were tied ; the first had a blue, the second yellow, the third green, and the fourth red. The black ribbon was destined for the reward of merit.

In this little community the ranks were confounded ; some were daughters of the noblesse, others of creditable tradesmen, but all poor. Madame de Maintenon, desirous of doing two good works at once, preferred the children of new converts ; and that the peasants in her lands might partake of the benefit of this establishment, she composed a body of their little daughters, which she called the sisters of charity, or the blue girls. They were lodged in a pavilion at the foot of the castle, and instructed separately by the pensionaries, who were all upon the same footing with the daughters of the noblesse.

Madame de Maintenon visited them every day. She employed herself in the classes, she made regulations, she visited the sick, dined with the children, and often upon the same provision. She had always five or six
of

of the genteelest and most agreeable with her in the palace.

Their education was carefully attended to, and great progress was made in it. Madame de Maintenon gave large presents to madame de Brinon, that she might if possible, cloy that avarice which is generally found in those who have solemnly renounced the goods of this world. Madame de Brinon began to look upon presents as offerings to the vestry ; and, in order to lay the relations of the children under contribution, the corps of Saint Candide, which the pope had given to madame de Maintenon, and she to Noisy, already performed miracles and brought in large sums.

Madame de Maintenon was offended at these mean artifices ; she was shock'd at the scandal it might give, but dissembled her uneasiness, sent away the greedy almoner, and settled a pension of a thousand livres upon madame de Brinon.

When disinterestedness was introduced into this community, the regulations of the institution were more strictly observed : madame de Maintenon saw with pleasure the success of her liberality, and this induced her to multiply her gifts. To take from madame de Brinon all pretence for hoarding up money, she provided for her relations, who were very numerous and very poor ; she had not yet done so much for her own.

The extreme fondness madame de Maintenon discovered for this community, made the ladies of the court desirous to see it. All applauded ; and madame de Montespan, who was able to have done more, and had done nothing, was confounded.

The king's curiosity was excited by what he heard ; he went to Noisy with all the courtiers ; they admired and praised all they saw with as much freedom as if the king had not been present. From that time the petitions from officers were sent to madame de Maintenon ; she received their daughters, and the king settled a fund upon his alms for the payment of their pensions to madame de Brinon upon the same footing as the rest.

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The report of this establishment spread over the provinces. Madame de Maintenon was solicited on all sides : she was so moved with the poverty of the nobleſſe, and at the ſight of the children which were preſented to her, that after having ſold her jewels, her horſes, and even her cloaths, ſhe mixed her tears with theirs, and ſaid to them : ‘ Providence will not abandon you ; I was born as poor, and more unhappy than you are.’ Beauty joined with poverty never ſuffered a denial ; to ſnatch from the ſeduction of the world, ſuch girls, whoſe blooming charms expoſed them to all its ſnares, was one of her favourite charities.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Scheme for the eſtabliſhment of Saint-Cyr.

HER compaſſion made her break through the law ſhe had preſcribed to herſelf, of never demanding any thing of the king. She repreſented to him.

‘ That by eſtabliſhing companies of gentlemen upon the frontiers, he had greatly relieved the diſtreſſes of the nobleſſe : but that her ſex was equally worthy of his attention, as being the weakeſt, and conſequently more expoſed to miſery.

‘ That great part of the nobleſſe was in ſuch extreme poverty, that every day young women deſcended from the moſt ancient families, were ſeen reduced to beggary, wandering from province to province, ſubjected to a thouſand dangers, and a prey to the moſt mortifying temptations, becauſe with their fathers remained only the remembrance of their ſervices, or the tokens of the great actions of their anceſtors.

‘ That it was for his intereſt and glory to keep alive by rewards and benefactions that noble emulation, that deſire of honour which induced his nobleſſe to ſacrifice at all times their lives in his ſervice.

‘ That, as a chriſtian, it was his duty to dedicate his power to the relief of the unfortunate, and the comfort of the miſerable ; that as the father of his country,

country, he was obliged to succour families whose chiefs, after having shed their blood in his service, saw those children who ardently desired to shed theirs also for him in their turn, depressed by poverty, and languishing in distress.

Madame de Maintenon represented these truths to him in so many different lights, and enforced them with so much energy, that the king was greatly affected. He reflected, he examined them more deeply. He caused enquiries to be made into the situation of his noblesse. The astonishment into which he was thrown by the description of their poverty, whose fathers, after having gloriously died in his service, left them desolate, hopeless and undone, made the conversation frequently turn upon this melancholy subject. Lewis was not one of those princes who feared being melted to compassion.

The fervent charity of madame de Maintenon made her attentive to every avourable moment, and her solid understanding afforded her the means to take advantage of it. Kings ought always to have a favourite who has experienced poverty: madame de Maintenon had severely felt it; she shewed him every advantage the state would owe to the establishment she had begun; she told him that a good education would perpetuate virtue and honour in families, would spread piety over the provinces, and bind the noblesse to him by new ties.

Struck with her reasons, the king said to her, "but, madam, what is it you would do? no queen of France has ever done the like." With Lewis it was only necessary to know the charity, to bestow it with magnificence; he improved upon madame de Maintenon's scheme, and resolved upon a foundation for five hundred young girls of distinction. The marquis de Louvois was terrified at the expence, and madame de Maintenon at the difficulty of educating so many. They confined themselves to two hundred and fifty, thirty

thirty six of which were to be professed, and twenty four lay sisters.

Madame de Maintenon entered into all the particulars of the expence, forgot not the most minute, held a mean between extreme abundance and extreme frugality, and traced the plan of an easy but not a superfluous life.

The place proper for this establishment was the next subject of their deliberations. It was necessary in the choice of it to consult the inclinations of madame de Maintenon, which would often lead her to visit it, and the obligation she was under not to go far from Versailles.

The king proposed Versailles itself, or between Versailles and Paris; but she intreated him to reflect, that nothing would be more disadvantageous to the community than frequent visits; that education would suffer by them; that the asylum of innocence ought not to be in a place where every thing was a share to it; that an inclination for the world would enter there with the grandees; that they ought to chuse a situation at such a distance from Versailles, that the community might be secured from the croud of importunate visitors, which its contiguity would draw to it, and yet near enough to have its subsistence from thence, and be warmed with the first rays from the throne.

At length Saint Cyr was fixed upon, which is about half a league distant from the court. The marquis de Louvois went thither, and gave orders to Mansard to examine the situation, the air, the facility of having water. Besides its being in the neighbourhood of Versailles, this place might be inclosed in the park, which would serve as a double security against the insults that more distant convents are sometimes exposed to.

The convent of the Benedictine nuns at Saint Cyr, which madame de Maintenon and the marquis de Louvois went to examine, appeared extremely fit for their purpose. They offered to purchase it: the nuns were alarmed: 'Our order, said they, has continued here ever since the reign of the holy king Dagobert.' They knew not perhaps that this monarch, a devotee, and a
libertine

libertine at the same time, founded a convent and a seraglio where-ever he went. Monsieur de Louvois gave them peremptory orders to quit the convent within fifteen days. Madame de Maintenon, whose interest it was to have been against them, became their protector. She would not suffer her foundation to commence with an act of violence and injustice; the Benedictines demanded five hundred thousand livres for their house, and the extravagance of this demand saved it.

April 9, 1685.] Mansard had orders to look out for another convenient situation, and to take madame de Maintenon's directions in every thing. The architect chose a house which belonged to the marquis de Saint Brissou-Segujer. The king purchased it for ninety one thousand livres. The bargain was concluded in the form of an exchange between monsieur de Saint Brissou and the marshal de la Feuillade.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Saint-Cyr.

May 1, 1685. **T**HE building was immediately begun; besides a great number of workmen who came from different places, the troops that were encamped at Versailles were employed. In the building of Saint-Cyr, there were seen at one time more than nine hundred masons, four hundred stonecutters, as many carpenters, in a word, above two thousand six hundred men carried on the work.

The king having asked the marquis de Louvois what sum was necessary for the maintenance of this house, madame de Maintenon preventing the minister's reply, told him that it was not easy to specify all the particulars, unless it was certainly known in what manner the community should be settled; that provisions and cloaths were not the only things to be considered, but an infinite number of others; and that, in order to satisfy him on this head, it was necessary to have the expences calculated by some person, who by entering

into

into the very spirit of the institution, might be enabled to give him an exact and particular account of all that was necessary for it.

Some days afterward, the minister told the king, that the expence of this community would amount to two hundred thousand francs a year. The king replied, that madame de Maintenon had drawn up a memoir, which he thought very just, and which did not make the expences so high. Louvois just looked at the total, and told the king, that it was not possible a hundred thousand, or even a hundred and fifty thousand francs, could be sufficient for the maintenance of the community: the event shewed that he was not deceived, and that madame de Maintenon had asked for the publick with the same moderation as for herself.

After some debate between the minister and madame de Maintenon, the king fixed upon a mean, and endowed the house with fifty thousand crowns; he committed to madame de Maintenon the care of furnishing it, and allowed her to take what sum she pleased for that purpose. This was sufficient to tie her hands, so much the more frugal as she was authorised to be liberal, she expended only fifty thousand crowns.

While at Versailles they were calculating the expence of this community, at Noisy the abbé Gobelin was employed in examining the vocation of the girls, who were desirous of retiring from the world, and had talents for educating youth. There were not to be any nuns in the community; the king did not like religious orders, and madame de Maintenon hated the little monkish meannesses, either real or attributed to them. The king and madame de Maintenon were resolved to have a community which should have all the virtues of a cloister, unincumbered with the exercises of one. It was their design to keep those for whom it was founded at a distance from the world; but not to render them incapable of entering into it.

The king would not allow the religious habit to be professed; madame de Maintenon therefore invented one which resembled that of the ladies of Miramion,

and

and presented one of her women dressed in it to the king. 'What a devil of a nun's cap have you given them?' said the king. The little cap was altered, and the king was pleased with the rest. He added the gold crosses for the ladies, and a large mantle training upon the ground for the robes of the choir, such as they wear at present.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Ordinances of Saint-Cyr.

MEAN time madame de Brinon was employed in forming a plan of the ordinances, and went to Versailles to consult madame de Maintenon, and to take her directions; she was eloquent and spoke with propriety and gracefulness, and greatly pleased the king: when the ordinances were digested and put in order, Racine and Boileau revised the style. The bishop of Chartres, the abbé Gobelin, and father de la Chaise, corrected the more essential faults. Cardinal Ranucci, the pope's nuncio, thought them so beautiful, that he sent a copy of them to his holiness.

It were to be wished that these ordinances were made publick: they are a master-piece of good-sense and devotion which are not often found together, and might be of great use in reforming the errors of other communities. The foundress well knew how to observe a mean between the pride of chapters and the meanness of convents; she united ease with regularity, and a life of piety with a life of happiness.

She was apprehensive that madame de Brinon might inspire this growing community with a taste for grandeur, and that the neighbourhood of a court, a royal foundation, the king's visits, and even her own, might suggest to the ladies an idea of splendor, and give them the air of canonesse: she therefore earnestly recommended to their confessors to preach humility to the candidates, and it was contrary to her inclination that they were called *the ladies of Saint-Louis*.

Monfieur

Monfieur de Villeroi, bifhop of Chartres, was for the ladies making absolute vows. Father de la Chaife, thought the prelate might difpenfe with them, and maintained, that the children would be educated better by perfons who ftill had connexions with the world, than by women who had renounced it. That absolute vows would fubject them to many ceremonies and exercifes of religion, and take up great part of that time which could not be better employed than in the education of youth; that there was great reafon to apprehend the tender and flexible minds of the fcholars might take a bent to cloiftral devotion, from the aulfere and penitent behaviour of their miftreffes, and entertain a defire for a ftate, the happinefs of which they would every moment hear extolled; and this would hinder them from becoming ufeul members of fociety, which was the defign of the institution.

‘ The purpofe of this foundation, faid he, is not
 ‘ to multiply convents, there are fufficient already,
 ‘ but to fettle agreeably in the world young wo-
 ‘ men virtuously educated. There are already too
 ‘ many nuns, and too few good wives and mo-
 ‘ thers. The education given at Saint-Cyr, will
 ‘ produce great virtues, and thofe, inftead of be-
 ‘ ing fhut up in cloifters, ought to be produced in
 ‘ the world, to correct and fanctify it.’

The king who greatly approved of his reafons, faid, *I will found a community and not a convent.* The ladies made only conditional vows; the event will fhew that father de la Chaife was miftaken, and that this houfe required absolute vows.

CHAPTER XXX.

Building of Saint-Cyr.

MEAN time the edifice was raifed with a truly royal magnificence; every obftacle was removed

ved by the unwearied attention of madame de Maintenon. Although the ground was marshy, and the distribution of the apartments was not easily settled, yet the building was finished in almost as little time as would be now employed in projecting it. The whole was compleated in fifteen months, and the expences amounted to fifteen hundred thousand francs.

The magnificence of Lewis was every where to be seen in his edifice, but many considerable faults were committed through precipitation. They made use of green wood throughout all the building. The ground floor was too low by more than six feet, the cellars, which were large and numerous, became sinks and common sewers; the springs they sought for were lost by raising the earth, and their sources turned by digging the cellars; which obliged them to raise a building without the compass of the inclosure, to fix a pump that drew the water into an aqueduct, and conveyed it into all the offices of the house. At Ruel they had not water enough, at Saint-Cyr they had too much. The door of the church was placed in a corner behind the coach-houses. The organs and the confessionaries were all together, although their uses were so very different. The foundation, being upon marshy ground, was ruined by the water.

In 1752 they were obliged to repair part of the building, the foundation of which had sunk five or six inches. In a word, the house of the ladies of Saint-Lewis requires such frequent and expensive repairs, that the successor of the prince who founded it has been heard to say; *I find it will be necessary to build them a house in another place.*

These faults excepted, nothing can be more grand, more majestick, or more convenient; the beautiful manner of Mansard is seen in the whole building. The inside shews the genius of madame de Maintenon, who regulated with the nicest attention whatever belonged to the elegance and convenience of the church, the great room where the assembly is held, the refectory, the offices, the four classes, and the bed-chambers,

bers, leaving all the rest to the taste and skill of the architect. The outside is more magnificent than regular, but the exquisite order within cannot be viewed without admiration.

CHAPTER XXXI.

The intentions of the King.

THE king thought this establishment worthy of his greatest attention. He wrote with his own hand upon the back of an account, the result of his reflexions on this subject, which equally proves his excessive goodness and his capacity for minute details, notwithstanding his more important designs ; and here it follows :

For the establishment of Saint-Cyr.

- ‘ Patents to be drawn up.
 - ‘ Estates to be given for the foundation.
 - ‘ Ornaments for the church.
 - ‘ Furniture of every kind.
 - ‘ A counsellor of state to be appointed, to assist in settling the accounts.
 - ‘ Money to be advanced, to serve till the first day of July, on which day the ladies enter Saint-Cyr.
 - ‘ To be proposed that the house be endowed with a larger revenue than is necessary for its maintenance, upon condition that what remains shall be appropriated to portioning the young ladies who marry from Saint-Cyr.
 - ‘ A considerable sum to be set apart for unforeseen occasions.
 - ‘ Regulations to be made : the ordinances to be examined : proper objects of this charity to be chosen.
 - ‘ Precautions to be taken against disorders, as well in manners, as in the administration of the revenues.
- ‘ All

‘ All presents to be prohibited, the house not to be allowed to acquire more revenues. Not to allow any more buildings for enlarging the house.

‘ The age and the time when the girls shall be received to be specified; and the number of years they are to remain in the house.’

In June 1686, the king gave an edict of erection, which was registred by the parliament the 18th of the same month. The preamble breathes the spirit of a father of the people.

‘ As we can never sufficiently express the great sense we have of the valour and zeal which the noblesse of our kingdom have shewn upon all occasions, by assisting the designs we have so happily accomplished for the grandeur of our state and the glory of our arms, the peace which we have so solidly established, having afforded us leisure and opportunity to extend our cares even to futurity, and to make the grandeur and happiness of our monarchy durable, we have established several societies on our frontiers, where, under the command of brave and experienced officers, we have caused a great number of young gentlemen to be educated, that the seeds of honour and virtue, derived to them by their birth, may be carefully cultivated and improved, that they may be formed to military exercises by an exact and severe discipline, and rendered capable of supporting in their turn the honour of the French name. And because we are convinced that it is no less just and equally useful to provide for the education of young women of noble extraction, especially for those whose fathers have died in our service, or being by their necessary expences in war reduced to poverty, and therefore unable to afford them a proper education, we have, upon mature deliberation, resolved to found and establish a house and community, wherein a considerable number of young girls, descended from noble families, and particularly such whose fathers have died in our service, or are at present employed in it, may be maintained and brought up

up in this community, in the principles of true piety and solid virtue, and receive such an education as will suit their birth and sex, according to the state in which it may please God to place them; so that after being well brought up in this community, those who leave it may carry into every province of our kingdom examples of modesty and virtue, and contribute to the happiness of families, which they enter by marriage, or to the edification of religious houses, in which they chuse to consecrate themselves to the service of God, for which purpose we have caused to be built the house of Saint-Cyr, &c.

The first article established * six and thirty ladies, whose number was not to be augmented, and who were to be chosen from among the two hundred and fifty young girls of noble extraction, of which the number is not expressly limited: the nomination of whom is, in the third article, reserved to the kings of France, who never chose any but such as can prove four descents of nobility. This is required only on the paternal side, because of the many improper alliances. But the young lady who is presented must be able to prove exactly the four descents from the father, by original writings, no collated copies being admitted.

By the fourth article the young ladies cannot be provided with vacant places, if they are not full seven years of age; or if they exceed twelve; and they are to stay in the community till they are twenty years of age.

By the seventh article the community is impowered to send back any of the young ladies to their relations when it shall judge proper, and the relations and guardians may take them out of the house when they please. By this article it is also provided that the ladies, the daughters of the noblesse, and the lay sisters shall be received into the community gratis, and all presents or gratuities offered with them expressly prohibited.

The

* The king has made an alteration in this article, and permits as many lay sisters as ladies of the choir to the number of eighty persons.

The eighth and ninth articles endow the community with the house, lands, and lordship of Saint-Cyr, the revenue of the abbey of Saint Denis, which had been already given by a brevet of the second of May, and which at that time amounted to a hundred and fourteen thousand livres, and fifty thousand livres a year, taken upon the domains of the district of Paris, till a fund for this annual sum was settled. Lands to the value of twenty thousand seven hundred and fifty livres were still wanting for the support of the community.

By the tenth article, the house was expressly forbid to receive for the future any augmentation of its revenue of what nature soever, except from the kings and queens of France, or from madame de Maintenon.

By the twelfth article, the money remaining in the treasury was to be employed in giving portions to the daughters of the noblesse who married from the community, and when these funds were not sufficient, money was to be paid out of the royal treasury to contribute to their portions: those who chose a cloistral life were to be received gratis into the royal abbeys, to which the king has the right of nomination.

CHAPTER XXXII.

Formalities.

THE monks of Saint Denis murmured at these dispositions, by which the privileges of an abbey were violated, whom the names, they said, of so many monarchs who were buried there, ought to have made sacred. The public thought, that it was entering into the views of the benefactors of the church, to consecrate to the education of youth, those revenues, which the corruption of the age had perverted to the luxury of a court abbé, or the gluttony of idle monks.

The court of Rome, which, to preserve its rights, sells to princes the privilege of doing good, claimed a great indemnification for the extinction of the abbey of

of Saint Denis*. Antony Arnould, who was a great admirer of the new establishment, although father de la Chaise had earnestly recommended it, wrote long letters in ridicule of the pope's avarice: after many debates the king granted twenty-five thousand crowns, and then Innocent the twelfth gave a bull in which he declares, that he made a *free*† gift of the revenue of the abbey of Saint Denis to the community of Saint Lewis.

The bishop of Chartres declared by an ordinance, that it was the king's will and his, that madame de Maintenon should be perpetual superiour of this community, as well for spiritual as temporal affairs. The ladies sent her a gold cross, adorned with flowers de lis, and these two verses of Racine engraved on it:

Elle est notre guide fidelle :

Notre félicité vient d'elle.

• Behold our faithful guide,

• Whence all our bliss and pride.' ELPHINSTON.

An ingenious allusion to the cross, and to her who was to wear it.

The king gave her a brevet, by which he invested her with all the rights, honours, and prerogatives of foundress of Saint-Cyr. Madame de Maintenon thought it her duty to refuse these titles, but the king and her friends representing to her that they signified nothing more, than that she had patronized the foundation of Saint-Cyr, and conducted it in the beginning, she admitted whatever titles they chose to give her.

A certain abbé having filled a sermon with her praises, she intreated him to suppress them all; the preacher told her, that those praises would inspire her children of Saint-Cyr, with an emulation to virtue and piety: 'If you think so, she replied, praise me as much as you please.'

She

* The king's brevet for uniting the revenue of this abbey to the house of Saint Lewis, is dated May 2d, 1686.

† The court of Rome demanded one hundred and eighty thousand livres.

She was named in the letters * patent, notwithstanding her intreaties to the contrary, but prevailed upon the king not to insist upon her effigies in the medal. In this piece is represented the ladies of Saint-Cyr, according to their different ages. The profest ladies have a kind of veil upon their heads, and a mantle over their habits. Piety is there represented, under the figure of a graceful woman veiled, who presides over this holy community, with this legend :

C. C. C. Puellæ nobiles Sancirianæ. †

The king neglected no ceremony, no act of kindness which could give encouragement to the house for the present, or distinction for the future. He went to Noisy, and there in the presence of the whole community, spoke thus to madame de Brinon ; ‘ I do not doubt your judgment, madam, and your candour in choosing proper persons to compose this new institution ; it was undertaken only for the glory of God, and the relief of my noblesse. My motives in founding it were pure and disinterested, let it be governed by the same.’

Madame de Maintenon taking counsel only of her esteem, her gratitude and the present state of Saint-Cyr, made madame de Brinon perpetual superiour. In her favour she broke through an article in the edict of creation, by which it is required that the superiour should be elected by the community, and changed once in three years. The youth of the persons who formed the new institution, seemed to justify the distinction she had made ; but it is dangerous to set aside regulations on any occasion, it is more so, when they relate to essential matters, and the worst consequences may be apprehended when this is done in the beginning of an establishment : madame de Maintenon was convinced of this truth too late.

* It is observable that she is there called *madame* de Maintenon ; according to the stile of chancery she should have been called the *lady* of Maintenon.

† A round number was named, because, tho’ there were but 250 young ladies, there were 36 profest, most of them so young, that the word *Puellæ* suited them.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

The first Regulations.

PLACES in Saint-Cyr were solicited with the greatest ardor from the most distant parts of the kingdom, and proofs of noble descent were sought for with the utmost diligence and exactness. Already more than a hundred young ladies had given in their certificates of four descents from noblesse, till the proofs they were obliged to produce could be finished: many of them produced eighteen descents. Madame de Maintenon did not require these proofs of those who were already at Noisy, but she was extremely exact with regard to all who afterwards were received into Saint-Cyr. Among the crowd of candidates she always preferred those who were most distressed, and least recommended.

She required that the candidates should produce a certificate of their poverty, signed by the bishop of their diocese, or by his grand vicars. This regulation is often eluded: a gentleman is always considered as poor: perhaps the sense of the word *poverty* is yet to be determined: benefactions destined for the use of the indigent noblesse, ought not to be the prey of avaritious wealth.

It was also settled, that the young ladies should be visited and examined before they were admitted, and such as were found to have any defect either of body or mind, should be rejected: an excellent precaution, by which the effects of contagious faults of constitution and temper are prevented. Compassion condemned it at first, a more reasonable compassion approved it.

The king desirous to give this community every mark of honour and distinction, permitted it his liveries for ever. It now wanted nothing but a coat of arms. Madame de Maintenon proposed a cross lowered, with a royal crown over it, strewed at the three ends with flowers de lis.

The young ladies were dressed uniformly. They wore a gown and petticoat of brown crape of Mans.

In

In Summer their under petticoats were of raw linen, in winter red bays, their head-dress was a white quilted cap, with several rows of plaits before, and tied up with ribbons of the same colour with the class they belonged to.

They were now removed from Noisy. The ladies and novices came first to Saint-Cyr. They were preceded by the corps of Saint Candide, attended by ecclesiastics, who deposited it in the church with all the veneration due to the relicks of holy martyrs.

On the day of the translation, the community was compleat, except the profest, to whom some ladies of eminent virtue were joined.

When they entered their several apartments, they found them compleatly furnished, every thing new, simple, yet in an elegant taste. This astonishing order, amidst so great a variety, seemed to partake of the fabulous descriptions in romances. They thought themselves in an enchanted palace, they were never satisfied with seeing and admiring so many new yet uniform beauties.

The king afterwards appointed a council to examine every year the affairs, and settle the accounts of the house, and madame de Maintenon appointed Manseau, who served her as equerry and steward, and who was a man of great experience and integrity, to superintend the expences of the house.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

Madame de Brinon.

SAINTE-Cyr became soon a source of disgust and uneasiness to madame de Maintenon. Great good was done there, but great faults were committed. The young ladies were educated with care, but the profest were weakly conducted. The superiour possessed every talent but that of governing well. Madame de Brinon knew the world, she had studied the fathers of the church, the poets, but she knew only the theory of her station. Her temper was unequal, rash, imperious, prodigal, emulous of fame, and greedy of riches.

Madame de Maintenon thought she had been cured of her failings, and the solid wisdom she displayed in her conversation, gave her a high idea of the greatness of her mind, and her capacity for the government of a religious community. She loaded her with honours, which instead of binding her to the new institution, lessened her attention to it, by giving her a taste for the world. In the choice of novices, madame de Brinon would be directed by prejudices very dangerous for the house: among those who offered themselves, she always fixed upon such as had the good fortune to please her, and she was very subject to unjust aversions. Madame de Maintenon expected that the superior of a community should be wholly disinterested.

Manseau had orders to restrain the lavish disposition of madame de Brinon, and to correct such little errors as were committed through her caprices: thus the superior was controlled without knowing she was so.

Confined now to spiritual affairs, she instructed the profest and the novices every day in the duties of religion, and on Sundays she gave them lectures upon the epistles and the gospels, in which her eloquence was so much admired, that even foreigners came to the grate of the choir to hear her.

Madame de Maintenon treated her with the highest respect; she was continually loading her with presents, prevented even her wishes, nothing was omitted that could give her consequence: she was considered as a kind of favourite at court, the king never went to Saint-Cyr, without shewing the kindest attention to the superior; her reputation increased, and her post became a dignity to be envied by ladies of the most illustrious families who had devoted themselves to a religious life; she was looked upon as a most extraordinary genius; people came from all parts to hear her lectures, which were called expositions of the gospels; the courtiers maintained, that in eloquence she equalled Bourdaloue; the ecclesiastics were jealous of her abilities and her fame; they disapproved of the benediction she gave the community with the air of a bishop, and she discontinued it.

Although

Although she found sufficient employment in spiritual affairs, yet she was offended at being dispensed with in temporals, and discovered that she was so: her furniture, her manners, her sentiments, were more suitable to an abbess than a nun, who ought to govern by the force of example. The king one day making a visit to Saint-Cyr, whispered some words in her ear: this familiarity almost turned her head, she now treated the ladies with insolence, and they never approached her without trembling.

Madame de Maintenon made several useful regulations, in which she always consulted madame de Brinon, but their sentiments were generally very different. In one was seen an exalted mind, an humble deportment, a prudent œconomy, great attention to the education of the young ladies, that inward recollection so necessary to all christians, and that affability which made her regarded by the community as its common mother. In the other appeared a thousand shining qualities, but mixed with great pride and boundless vanity, a haughty reserve, which made it difficult to get access to her, and which rendered her society disagreeable, a propensity to pleasure, a taste for vanity, a violent passion for novelties of all kinds. This opposition of character, laid the ladies of Saint-Cyr under great restraint, who were equally desirous to please her who had instituted, and her who governed them.

Madame de Maintenon finding herself perpetually contradicted by madame de Brinon, declared her sentiments freely to some of her friends upon the inconveniencies that must necessarily arise from this conflict of authority: she would have abandoned her work if charity had permitted her. Madame de Brinon in every debate took advantage of her title of superiour, and the rights annexed to that title by the regulations of the community. Madame de Maintenon was too modest to speak of her own, and too gentle to enforce them. In order to give more weight to her advice, she went every day to Saint-Cyr to conjure the superiour, to do what she was intitled to expect from her obedience.

Madame de Brinon having been accustomed to a life of freedom, with difficulty submitted to the regularity of a cloister, which the presence of madame de Maintenon obliged her to. Yet she was every day more esteemed by the court. The princesses, the ministers, the cardinals were her friends, her friendship courted, and almost her protection solicited. Madame de Maintenon authorised the respect of the publick for her. At church, in the garden, in the refectory, she always gave her precedence, which madame de Brinon accepted with a carelessness that astonished all who observed it.

Saint-Cyr seemed to be the residence of peace and joy, yet discord was there : madame de Brinon had set one part of the community against the other. The profest complained to madame de Maintenon, who was greatly shocked, but deferred till another time an answer to their complaints : when the court went to Fontainebleau, she took measures for maintaining good order in the community during her absence.

Madame de Brinon, was seized with a dangerous illness : madame de Maintenon forgot all her faults, and was greatly afflicted : she sent Fagon to her, and settled couriers upon the road to inform her every hour of the state of her health : when she was a little recovered the king made her a visit : this favour completed her intoxication, and drew on her ruin : her health returned, and with it her caprice and her insolence.

Her conduct grew insupportable, some ecclesiasticks of distinction were deputed to her. The bishop of Chartres was at length sent to Saint-Cyr. She could not be persuaded to alter her sentiments, and always objected to the regulations. Madame de Maintenon tired out with her obstinacy, was upon the point of leaving all to her management, but her confessors remonstrated to her that all would be lost : they allowed that madame de Brinon was wise, learned, eloquent, and better qualified to instruct the community, than any other person, but that she loved power, liberty and grandeur more than suited her state : madame de
Main-

Maintenon was prevailed upon to continue her cares, still soothing madame de Brinon with all those little attentions which she thought could give her pleasure, and carefully avoiding every thing that could offend her.

Madame de Brinon under pretence of ill health, went to see her relations in the Vexin, and shewed the ladies of Saint-Lewis that they were capable of governing themselves.

At her return, she declared that her fat and her florid complexion were not natural, and that the waters of Bourbon could alone restore her to a good state of health. She would not wait for a regular permission from the bishop, but set out for Paris with mademoiselle de Blair her niece. In Bourbonnois, extraordinary honours were paid her: she had two coaches of her own, and often four in her train: she was preceded by a man who had the care of preparing her lodgings: the great towns sent deputations to compliment her: the villages were under arms: at church her knees always rested upon a cushion of velvet. These honours which madame de Maintenon received with a graceful confusion, madame de Brinon supported with an air as majestick, as if she had been born to a throne.

During her stay at Bourbon she ingrossed all the homage, regulated all the amusements: every one was solicitous to please her: entertainments were made for her, rich gifts presented to her, petitions humbly offered. The noblest families in the province accompanied her. The court was informed of every particular relating to this pompous journey, and laughed at it: the king was shocked, and madame de Maintenon, upon whom all the ridicule of this conduct fell, regretted it in silence.

In the mean time, all was peace at Saint-Cyr, the most exact order was established, the rules of a cloistral life more strictly observed, the ladies entered into their several employments, and madame de Maintenon directed them. Her departure for Fontainebleau interrupted their joy, each of the young ladies wept as if she had lost her mother, however the regulations were

obeyed with such exactness, and peace so solidly established, that throughout the whole community nothing was seen but chearful piety, decent freedom and holy friendship. The return of Madame de Brinon which was daily expected, was all they wanted to compleat their happiness.

Madame de Brinon after staying at Bourbon six weeks, and fifteen days with her relations, sated with the adoration of all the nobility of the country, at length arrived at Fontainebleau, where the court was to continue for some days longer, and alighted at the hotel des Fermes. Madame de Maintenon sent to desire she would dine with her, and presented her to the king, who received her with great complaisance: the next day she went to Paris, where she staid a few days to recover the fatigue of her journey. Marly was just then finished, as was Trianon likewise, which had been demolished to be rebuilt with the beauty and magnificence it now appears in. This place was the seat of pleasure for the king: he settled a private household there, under the direction of Bontems: novelty made these houses of pleasure agreeable to the whole court.

There it was that Lewis would divest himself of majesty to introduce as much freedom as the presence of a king could admit of.

Madame de Brinon intoxicated with her favour at court, thought herself intitled to part of that respect which was paid by Bontems to madame de Maintenon, and wrote to acquaint him that she intended to see Marly: that she expected he would give proper orders for her reception, and that after having dined at Marly she would visit Trianon.

This style astonished Bontems, it was what the dauphin himself did not venture to assume, however the time pressed; Bontems the most exact and regular of men, not being able to receive the king's orders upon this occasion, obeyed those of madame de Brinon, uncertain whether madame de Maintenon would approve of this step, but very sure that she could excuse it to the king. All the servants were found ready at their posts, and madame de Brinon was served at dinner

dinner by the officers of the king, in the same manner as madame de Maintenon or the queen. Bontems did the honours there, as well as at Trianon, whither she afterwards went.

The next day, the behaviour of *madame* the superior, was the only subject of conversation at Fontainebleau: madame de Maintenon laughed as well as the rest, and said that a nun could not know the consequence of such liberties, and that no permission had been asked for the entertainment that was made for her.

Madame de Brinon when she returned to Saint-Cyr, disapproved of every thing that had been done, but particularly with what madame de Maintenon had directed: she wrote to her at Fontainebleau, and with such warmth that she told her in her letters, that every accident, which had happened, and all the sickness at present in the community, had been occasioned by the regulations established during her absence.

Madame de Maintenon weary of these repeated insults, began at length to think seriously of delivering her community from a spirit so restless, and a heart so ungrateful. She consulted the wisest and most candid among her friends: they all advised her to remove madame de Brinon from Saint-Cyr. She could not without great concern tear herself from a person whom she had loved with so much tenderness, 'but when the publick good is in question, said she, we ought cheerfully to sacrifice our private affections.' The abilities of madame de Brinon were necessary for the beginning of an establishment: to fix and confirm it, virtues were still more so.

Mean time the gentlest methods were used to gain her, but the superior was persuaded that madame de Maintenon would tolerate all she did, and durst not importune the king with complaints against her, lest they should reflect upon her own judgment: she had likewise a great dependence upon the abbé Gobelin, who who thought her absolutely necessary to the community, and supported by these hopes she persevered in all her errors. Madame de Maintenon now treated her

with less familiarity and kindness : madame de Brinon laid the blame of this alteration in her behaviour upon the ladies of Saint-Lewis : she suspected that during her absence they had complained of her to madame de Maintenon, and many expressions of the deepest resentment escaped her.

CHAPTER XXXV.

Madame de Brinon is removed from Saint-Cyr.

1688.] **T**OWARDS the end of October the court returned to Versailles : madame de Brinon who had no suspicion of her approaching misfortune, was suffered to govern the community as she pleased, because it was determined she should not govern it long. Madame de Maintenon told the king all that she had carefully concealed from him, candidly owned that she had been mistaken, represented to him, that after her death Saint-Cyr would be the abode of pride, faction and cabal, and that the dangerous example of a perpetual superiour in madame de Brinon, would hereafter inspire some ambitious member of the community, who might succeed her, with an inclination to protract her authority beyond the limited time. The king replied, ' I told you, madame, that it was wrong, to violate the laws in favour of madame de Brinon.'

The marchioness de Montchevreuil, the intimate friend of madame de Brinon, was sent to her with a letter de catchet, containing an order to quit the house at a certain hour the next day : she was charged also with a message from the bishop, requiring her obedience to that order, and a discharge from the superiority. The marchioness visited madame de Brinon in her apartment, and after a good deal of preparation pronounced her sentence.

Madame de Brinon who was firmly persuaded that the friendship and esteem of madame de Maintenon for her was unalterable, heard this news with an astonishment that kept her motionless for some minutes. She wept, she complained, but growing calmer, she intreated

treated the marchioness not to mention her misfortune to any person in the community: she even concealed it from her women, and causing her apartment to be shut up, she employed the rest of the day in packing up her cloaths with an air of solicitude and cheerfulness. Madame de Montchevreuil assured her that the community would allow her a pension of two thousand livres a year. 'What is that, she replied, to the value of my place?'

The next day the lady portress seeing her going, cried: 'Ah! madame, then you are going to take another journey, and we have not had time to grieve, because we have been ignorant of your design.' Madame de Brinon embraced her, and told her she would not be long absent: she ordered her coachman to carry her to the hotel de Guise in Paris, and sent in her name to the dutchess of Hanover who was there, with whom she had some connexion. That princess was delighted with her good fortune, in having a visit from a person of the dignity, the merit and great consideration of madame de Brinon, and came immediately with the princesses her daughters to receive her. *

Madame

* I am going to tell you a piece of news which will surprise you. Madame de Brinon the soul of Saint-Cyr, the intimate friend of madame de Maintenon is no longer superiour of the community: she left Saint-Cyr four days ago, and is now at the hotel de Guise: she does not seem to be upon ill terms with madame de Maintenon, for she sends every day to enquire after her health: this increases the curiosity of the publick to know the cause of her disgrace. Sevigné's letters, December 10, 1688.

All I know yet concerning madame de Brinon is, that the king has given her a pension of two thousand livres a year. They say that she intends to go to Saint-Antoine; she preached extremely well, and that you know, there is the good Gobel in her place, who, to fill it, and that which he has already will be obliged to preach all day. Sevigné's letters, December 13, 1688.

Madame de Maintenon gave out that ill health, old age, and a fondness for solitude had induced madame de Brinon to retire from Saint-Cyr. The ladies of Saint-Lewis rejoiced at it, but the young ladies wept excessively. The day after the superior's departure madame de Maintenon went to Saint-Cyr, and assembling the community thus spoke to them.

‘ The great progress you have made in piety, has determined me to establish in this house those strict rules, which you desire with such ardour yourselves. I feared, and you are convinced my fears were but too well grounded, that madame de Brinon would not enter with zeal enough into this design. I have not been able to remove her without doing great violence to myself: I esteem her, I love her still, I am grieved that I no longer see her amongst you, but when your happiness was in danger, I balanced no more, and I shall be always ready to sacrifice to it my inclinations and my friends. Every one is greatest in their own particular talents: your superiority was admirable for forming wise regulations, but she has not appeared to the king to be proper for maintaining the observance of them. Besides I am desirous of seeing while I am yet alive, how this house will be governed by a superior drawn from its own bosom: madame de Brinon accustomed to uncontrolled dominion, would have opposed this trial: I was willing to spare you, my children, the inconveniencies of a perpetual superior, and madame de Brinon the mortification of an equal.’

The whole community submitted without murmuring to the government of madame de Loubert, who had been next in authority to madame de Brinon, and whose gentleness, prudence and humility, repaired and obliterated the errors of her whom she succeeded.

Madame de Brinon who did not know that madame de Maintenon, although she was the tenderest, the most compassionate of women, was also the most firm, declared

declared her situation to the dutchess of Hanover, who in repeated letters solicited her to restore madame de Brinon to her place. Madame de Maintenon was so far from yielding to the intreaties of the princess, that she required of madame de Brinon a resignation in form, which the other instantly complied with.* Finding her sentence irrevocable, and observing the kindness of the dutchess of Hanover to be daily decreasing, she attempted to retire into some convent at Paris, but all proving insupportable, she went to Maubuisson, where she settled herself more agreeably, and without any dependence upon the community. She there entered into a tender correspondence with madame de Maintenon, who by a thousand instances of respect and esteem, consoled her for her disgrace. She died at Maubuisson, regretting the world, Saint-Cyr and life.

Madame de Maintenon no longer opposed by insolent authority, made regulations more useful and more strict, notwithstanding the murmurs of some who had favoured the views of the late superiour. The house now enjoyed a calm, which till then it had known only in idea: madame de Maintenon went thither every day: madame de la Maisonfort, who from her infancy had been canonesse of Poussay, was received into it: she was greatly respected at court, and had all that fervor of devotion which persons generally have, who by great afflictions are called to God. The king had given her lands worth two thousand crowns a year: she had refused several advantageous matches, and equalled madame de Brinon in wit and in obstinacy, but surpassed her in virtue.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

The utility of Saint-Cyr.

SAINTE-Cyr was from its beginning exposed to calumny. The king often went there, and with very few attendants. It was therefore reported, that
madame

* This resignation is dated December 11, 1688.

madame de Maintenon had founded this community with a design to disengage him from the marchioness de Montespan, and in the view of so many young beauties, improved by a liberal education, to offer him pleasures well calculated to awaken the passions of a man accustomed to all, and with all disgusted.

Although this conjecture should not be refuted by the conduct and character of madame de Maintenon, so uniformly, and steadily maintained during her whole life, it would be by the date of these two events: madame de Montespan was quitted for ever in 1680, and Saint-Cyr was not built till 1686.

The publick ventured to report what it durst not even believe, for was it possible to believe that Saint-Cyr was a seraglio for the king? however, we may read in more than twenty volumes, that the duke de Roquelaure married mademoiselle de Laval, who was educated at Saint-Cyr, and so much beloved by the king, that he created her husband a duke and peer of France. An absurd and ridiculous calumny, mademoiselle de Laval was never at Saint-Cyr. She was maid of honour in 1680 to the princess of Bavaria, first wife to the dauphin, and married Biran duke de Roquelaure in 1683, three years before Saint-Cyr was founded.

Was madame de Maintenon, it will be asked, acquainted with these shocking slanders? Yes, she knew them, and despised them. They fell insensibly, and never gained any credit, but in foreign countries, where they were at last deposited in the meanest and most ridiculous of libels, intitled, *The amours of madame de Maintenon*. * There Lewis XIV. was represented entering Saint-Cyr, a hundred beauties passing in review before him, throwing his handkerchief to the fairest, and attending the last evening prayers to expiate this sin, like that prince who every day debauched a nun, and had his confessor waiting at the door to absolve him.

Madame

* Printed in Holland by Peter Marteau, in the year 1694.

Madame de Maintenon's enemies were enraged at the fame she acquired by this foundation; most of them attributed to prudential views, a work which charity only had suggested. It was an asylum they said, which she secured to herself, if she should happen to be disgraced at court. The distribution of places made her friends and dependants: she effaced the stains of her past conduct by giving herself the merit of a foundress: she could not be a queen, she would at least be a Saint: and a thousand other absurd censures were propagated, which none but weak and wicked minds could think probable.

Madame de Maintenon could only fall by the death of the king, and even in that fall she must necessarily be still great: she was so little solicitous to conciliate the friendship of particular families, that she left to father de la Chaise the nomination of the young ladies, as well to avoid the acknowledgements due to such a benefit, as the murmurs which a refusal always occasioned: sure of the rectitude of her intentions, doubtful of her judgment.

Such as could neither mistake the motives, nor blame the execution of the scheme attacked the solidity of it. 'Much better institutions, say they, have degenerated, and Saint-Cyr which now that we are all religious, is the residence of virtue and piety, may, without looking too far forward, be the receptacle of impiety and vice: for can it be supposed that three hundred young girls, in the neighbourhood of a gay and voluptuous court, should escape seduction, especially when the king's authority does not enforce the observation of the rules? It is not reasonable to believe that young men and young women can be so near each other, without thinking ill, and practising it likewise.'

Such is the opinion of madame de la Fayette; and thus it is that the best establishments are always condemned among the French: one would imagine that it is the particular character of our nation, to love publick charities, to desire them with ardor, and to blame

blame them when they are founded. Lewis XIV. has done greater things than the hospital for invalids, and the community of Saint-Cyr, but he has never done better.

His successor has imitated his benevolence, by founding that military school, in which five hundred noble youths learn the trade of heroes at the expence of idleness and luxury.

Madame de Maintenon formed the scheme herself, she consulted only her own heart, and did not know till after it was executed, that the great Ximenés, had formed such another in Spain.

The immortal rector of Saint-Sulpice, to whom Paris owes so many benefits, which Paris has so ill acknowledged; has copied in little, the establishment of Saint-Cyr, by founding the community of the infant Jesus, in which thirty young girls of condition are educated in virtue and piety.

Ximenés, Lewis the fourteenth, Maintenon, Lewis the fifteenth, Languet, all the exalted souls of every age, and every rank, resemble each other, have the same ideas of publick good, and seem instinctively to pursue the same end.

It has been proposed, that Saint-Cyr should send colonies into the provinces, that the noblesse might be more generally relieved. Madame de Maintenon's plan cannot be too much extended. The state countries * would readily assist an establishment so useful, and funds might be raised upon church lands, which by being thus applied, would fulfil the intentions of the donors.

The woman, who now so gloriously shares the throne of Christina, thought she could not give Sweden a more convincing proof of her affection for the nobility, than by projecting a foundation upon the model of Saint-Cyr. She considered the plan of it with emulation, and renounced it with regret; her
revenues

* The state countries are the provinces where imposts are appointed by the assemblies of the states.

revenues had bounds, her charity knew none; however she has done all that could be performed by the wife of a king, who is perpetually restrained by his senate, and controled by the states of his kingdom.

How happy then are the French! there is no establishment which better deserves the protection of the prince than that of Saint-Cyr. This Lewis well knew, he who entered like a father into all its necessities, and provided like a king for all its expences. Too jealous of the foundation to share the glory of it with any of his subjects, he decreed that it should receive no benefactions but from the kings and queens of France. To sovereigns only it belongs to relieve the noblesse, who daily sacrifice their lives for their service: he did not doubt but that his successors would complete a work he had so happily begun: he foresaw that the piety of our queens would make them take delight in improving, maintaining, and extending an establishment, of which more than twelve hundred families have already found the utility.

Madame de Maintenon had no fears concerning the duration of a work, which taking in the whole system of the state, interested every citizen in its prosperity. She designed to have enlarged the inclosure, to have built a country-house for it in a purer air, to have endowed it with revenues, sufficient for removing the inconveniencies occasioned by the badness of the air, and the overflowing of the waters, that her children might acquire that strong and vigorous complexion, equally necessary in the world, and in the cloister, the disorders of the finances and the necessities of the state did not permit her to ask the king for benefactions reserved for peace and his posterity.

The successor of Lewis the fourteenth has not disappointed his hopes: he has been liberal in his gifts to a house so dear to our kings, and so useful to their people. A sum of eighty thousand livres * has been lately appropriated to the building of an aqueduct for cleaning

* I wrote this in 1753.

cleaning the cellars in the building, and carrying off the water with which they were overflowed.

Most of the young ladies devote themselves to a religious life: one day all the class had a vocation for the veil, through the persuasions of a director who thought there could be no salvation out of a cloister: madame de Maintenon was greatly perplexed, she would not blame the bishop, but says the author whose memoirs I copy, 'I saw what passed in her heart.'

She had formed a design of taking from each abbey, to which the king had a right of nomination, the portion of a profest nun, to be bestowed by Saint-Cyr, on those who quitted the community. This regulation would have facilitated the marriages of the young ladies: while madame de Maintenon lived, their alliance was greatly solicited; the husband of a young lady of Saint-Cyr never failed to be promoted to great employments, they became farmers general, governors, lieutenant-governors: the ladies educated with the nicest care, made them happy in their virtues, and laid at least the foundation of their fortune.

It was with this view that the king added sixty thousand livres a year to the foundation, and this sum is wholly appropriated to portioning the young ladies, who all, when they quit the community, have a thousand crowns: this sum at present is not all paid, because a great number entering the community at eleven years of age, there are above twenty who leave it every year.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

The education at Saint-Cyr.

THE method of education at Saint-Cyr, may be a model for all publick colleges. The exercises are there distributed with judgment. The young ladies rise at six o'clock, hear mass at eight, breakfast at nine, dine at eleven; they read by turns during dinner

dinner time, are allowed to play and to divert themselves till one, and work till six, when the whole community goes to supper. They are only permitted to go into the parlour, during fifteen days at the close of each quarter, lest the too great number of visitors should interrupt their studies.

They are placed in classes, and these subdivided into little companies: all are taught with gentleness, all observed with attention, the honour and pleasure of behaving well exprest by a ribbon, which distinguishes the most meritorious, is all their reward, shame almost the only punishment. They are taught to practise virtue; they are inspired with a love for it: the genius of each is consulted; they force not nature, but direct and improve it. All that they read, hear, or see, tends to inspire them with sentiments becoming their birth, and suitable to their station. They are instructed in antient and modern history, geography, musick and drawing. Their style is formed by little compositions; their memory carefully cultivated; provincial pronunciations corrected; they give modesty, simplicity, gracefulness to their manners; their studies are regulated by the particular taste and propensity of each scholar, and as their labour is continued throughout the whole day, and all, even to amusement is instruction, they soften the fatigue of such incessant application by variety, and the days slide rapidly away without languor or satiety.

In Saint-Cyr none of those preferences are allowed which introduce discord and malevolence in schools, which make some hated, and which give disgust to others; none of those familiarities, which, by violating the laws of decorum, destroy the most tender friendship. Their talents are cultivated, their beauty blooms without care; they are not taught how to please, but to think of God, to love him, and to serve him. Their minds are not contracted by enforcing the necessity of minute acts of devotion, but filled with noble principles, with christian and with moral virtues.

All

All imaginable care is taken to preserve their health, and when they are sick, such tender solicitude, such exact attention is shewn them, as leave them no cause to neglect the paternal house, and make them love their infirmary.

The ladies fulfil their vow of instruction with extreme application and superiour capacity. In no other religious house can be found so much piety, wit and solid sense united : qualities due to madame de Maintenon, who, to instruct the mistresses of the classes in their duty, submitted to become one herself, and during two years, regularly performed all the offices of one. From that time the most exact order has been constantly maintained, and two hundred and fifty young ladies are governed by the classes of black and flame-coloured ribbons.

What has greatly contributed to perpetuate the system of education, established by madame de Maintenon in this community, is its happiness, in being always well governed ; a happiness it owes intirely to its foundress, who in the election to all the dignities of the house, decreed that the votes should be entirely free. All the superiour employments are well filled, because those who obey are worthy to command, and those who command are ready to obey. Madame de Mornai, the grand-daughter of the marquis de Montchevreuil, the last superiour, possessed all the virtues of her station, and all the talents necessary for her place. She was succeeded by madame du Han, the present superiour : the qualities of one lady of Saint-Lewis, are the qualities of all.

Mademoiselle d'Aubigné was educated there : mademoiselle de Blois lived there for some weeks, and received confirmation there : the mother of the present king, while yet a child, passed every tuesday and wednesday at Saint-Cyr, and always came out more amiable.

A German princess of the Palatine's family, called the princess of Veldens, was ruined in the desolation of the Palatinate. She knew that if Lewis XIV. had a minister whose temper was cruel, and who always gave the

the harshest counsels, that there was also a woman in his court, whose soul was accessible to pity, and who loved to relieve the unhappy. This princess came to France with two of her daughters, and travelled part of the way on foot. She brought with her proofs of her being related to the dauphiness.

Madame de Maintenon received and treated them with the respect, that was suitable to their rank, and the tenderness due to their misfortunes. The youngest daughter of this princess, who was called the princess Christina, desired to be received into the community of Saint-Cyr: she took the habit of the green class, and died a nun there. The mother had a pension, and this speech from the mouth of the king: 'There is nothing, madame, but the pleasure of doing you service myself, that can soften my regret for the distresses you have suffered unknown to me.'

Here, Manseau interrupted his recital, exclaims, 'How many charitable actions might I relate if madame de Maintenon had not buried them in oblivion; some by doing them privately herself; others by commanding me never to disclose them! How many children, widows, how many whole families have been relieved by her! how many young women reclaimed from vice! how many officers indemnified for the refusals they suffered from the ministers! I should never come to an end, were I permitted to reveal all I know; but God will not suffer so many good works to be hid, nor let the world want the edification of so glorious an example: history will preserve some of the virtues of this inimitable lady; it will declare to posterity, that she made use of her influence over the king, only to engage him to relieve the poor, that she never thought of herself; that the veneration of Lewis the Great for her increased every day. It will disclose that virtue which I can only admire, nor will her affection for Saint-Cyr remain unnoticed, nor the good she did there be forgot.' Here is at least one lady beloved and esteemed by her servants.

Saint-

ni Saint-Cyr was her only passion ; she would often be there at six o'clock in the morning, that she might be present at the rising of the young ladies : would assist in combing their hair, she would dress them herself. She would attend one class through the whole day, to observe if there was any thing to be corrected, and continue this assiduity till it was perfect: Nothing seemed laborious, tedious, or dull, that could be advantageous to Saint-Cyr. Though wholly present to any one thing she was engaged in ; yet she seemed to be in all, and every where. She enobled the meanest employments by undertaking them herself. Sometimes she would instruct the novices, or give lessons of spirituality to the nuns, which surprised the most mystical. Sometimes in the offices, she recommended diligence to the lay-sisters by her own example. One day, as she was going out of the kitchen to attend a great ceremony, 'Madame,' said one to her, you will not 'smell of musk.' 'True, she replied, but who will 'suppose that it is I?'

She was particularly solicitous to preserve that purity of manners, by which she wished to see her community distinguished. Madame de Dangeau happening to praise the beauty of one of the ladies, madame de Maintenon did not bring her back for five years to Saint-Cyr. This lady was the only one amongst them who was very handsome : the marquis de Louvois, when he saw them all assembled, exclaimed, 'What 'a prodigious expence to maintain all these, yet if 'they were handsome, one would not think it too 'much.'

The young ladies were watched with the greatest circumspection, every moment was dedicated to improvement ; some of them falling sick through too great application. Dodart, a good physician, tho' a jansenist, proposed as a remedy, to give them the amusing writings of Port Royal to read. 'Ah ! monsieur, answered madame de Maintenon, with great emotion, I would rather that they should die.'

She required, that her adopted daughters should be alike disinterested and frugal ; that they should be capable

pable of denying all gratifications to themselves, conformable to their vow, and be liberal in charities agreeable to their duty. One of the rules made by her was, that no collations should be given in the parlour, to any person whatsoever. By establishing this law, she lessened the number of visitors, always inconvenient, sometimes dangerous, and at best unprofitable. Were it not for this law, Saint-Cyr would become an inn.

The count d'Aubigné dining with father Bourdaloue at madame de Maintenon's one day, when the father was to preach at Saint-Cyr, 'Do not depend upon a collation, father, said he, Saint-Cyr is the house of God, there is neither eating nor drinking there.' 'Perfection, replied madame de Maintenon, is not to be expected; instruction is our merit, our defect inhospitality.' The poor profited of what the relations of three hundred persons would have devoured without receiving any advantages from it.

Pride, of which Saint-Cyr has been so often accused, and at present with so little reason, insinuated its dangerous influence among the young ladies. Madame de Maintenon perceived this growing fault, and repress it. The pupils were employed in meaner offices, and not being at liberty to choose their stations, they were taught to despise none. She desired that they might be made diligent and industrious, but not condemned to fatigue; the best lesson was her own example; she never was a moment idle, not even when the king was with her: 'The labour of the hands she often used to say, is the penitence God has imposed on sinful mortals.'

Even her domestics worked at particular trades: in her anti-chamber, they were always seen usefully employed. In those of other ladies, the servants were gaming. Her porter used to quit his trade to answer with civility importunate solicitations. Her visitors were never introduced by an insolent and lazy groom of the chamber; all that were in her house breathed the love of labour; the poor and the happy, for whom alone her door was opened,

to

to the one, through inclination, the other though decency, saw, when admitted, the first lady of the court, dictating a letter, and turning the spindle with an activity, that seemed to console the former for their poverty, and reproach the latter with their perpetual idleness.

The indolent dutchess will laugh at these little circumstances; the uninstruative wit will make me share the ridicule he connects with such trifles; the politician, enraged to meet with virtues where he flattered himself he should find crimes, will throw the book away with contempt: but what says that amiable sage, to whom I would dedicate it? If I were not as well convinced of his excessive modesty, as of his partial friendship; that man in whom all is noble simplicity, who is now seen cutting down the trees of Montesquieu, and now giving laws to the world? These trifles please him in all women: in the wife of Lewis the fourteenth, they will charm him.

Pride, always mortified, and always resuming new force, shewed itself under the name of dignity of sentiment, 'My children, said madame de Maintenon, be not vain-glorious: I am so enough for you.' She blamed herself for all the faults of her adopted daughters; 'We were desirous to have wit,' said she, and we have made orators; devotion, and we have made quietists; modesty, and we have made prudes; elevated sentiments, and pride is carried to excess.'

The young ladies at length became humble by the care that was taken to repress their vanity; they were educated like others; and wit so effectually banished, that a mistress of a class said to madame de Maintenon, 'Be easy, madam, the *yellow ribbons* have not common sense.'

Her fondness for Saint-Cyr increased every day; the more good she did there, the more she was desirous of doing. Surrounded by all the pleasures of the court, she formed a thousand pretences to quit them. Saint-Cyr relieved her, when fatigued with greatness; when oppressed with languor, here she always

ways found amusement. She was not apprehensive, that by leaving the king for a few days, she should find him at her return less tender, or less respectful: she had not that restless curiosity which gives terrors; lest the clue to all affairs should be lost. She hated the journies to Fontainebleau, because they separated her too long from her family; for she often said, she had no family but Saint-Cyr.

‘ When, says she in a letter to the superiour, when shall I see myself again at that large table, surrounded with all my daughters, where I am more happy than at a royal banquet?’ Among all the verses that written written in her praise, the four worst were those that pleased most, because she found Saint-Cyr in them.

*Elle voit les honneurs avec indifférence :
Son cœur de vains desirs n'est jamais combattu :
Sa maison même de plaisance
Est une école de vertu.*

‘ With vain desires her bosom never beats ;
‘ To vulgar honours she continues cool :
‘ Her very pleasure-seat
‘ Is sacred virtue's school.

ELPHINSTON.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

Esther. Athaliah. Racine.

ALWAYS attentive to the improvement of her young daughters, she composed conversations, which incited them to virtue, corrected their ideas, and gave them a habit of speaking gracefully. These dialogues are extremely fine, the manner is well supported, the style just, clear, and elegant, the subject discussed with ease and propriety. They have been imitated by madame de Glapion, who came very near her model; and by monsieur Collo, rector of Chevreuse, who is greatly inferior to it.

The young ladies learned them emulously, and repeated them with so much intelligence and a grace so natural, that they seemed to have been conversations that instant formed. The king one day passing thro' the gardens of Saint-Cyr, when the community was walking, he desired them to repeat some of those conversations before him, and was extremely pleased with them. Those who could not repeat, expressed their joy at seeing the king, by singing some verses in his praise, or by making him little compliments, expressive of the simplicity of their age.

The superiour had taught them to declaim, and they acted among themselves the tragedies of Marianne, Polieucte, Alexander and Iphigenia. Madame de Brillon had written one herself, extremely bad indeed, but composed, learned, and acted in fifteen days. They had erected a little theatre in the house; madame de Maintenon encouraged these amusements: she thought they inspired them with virtue, and gave elegance to their manners.

They afterwards acted the tragedy of Andromache; but either because the actresses were chosen with great judgment, or that they began to assume the manners of the court, which they saw from time to time, madame de Maintenon thought this piece but too well represented, and was apprehensive that this amusement would produce effects contrary to her views. In a letter to Racine, she says, 'Our little girls have lately acted your Andromache, and so well, that for the future, they will act no pieces but yours.' She intreated him to compose in his leisure hours, a kind of moral, or historical poem, but in the manner of a dialogue. It was absolutely necessary, she told him, that love should have no place in this work; that he need not be circumscribed by rules, since it would remain buried in Saint-Cyr; and that it was sufficient if it instructed and amused the children, for whose use it was designed.

Racine was greatly perplexed by this letter, devotion, interest, the king, had drawn him from poetry, in which he excelled, to throw him into history, where probably

probably he painted like a poet, and narrated like a courtier. He was very desirous of pleasing madame de Maintenon, and to deny was not in the power of a man, of whom the king had said, when he saw him with Cavoye, *Racine wants to appear a courtier, and Cavoye a man of wit*. But he had a great reputation to support; his works had corrected the false taste of the public, and he was terrified at the delicacy he had himself introduced.

His master, Corneille, after quitting the scene, appeared on it again, only to be hissed. Racine, though inferior to him, dreaded a greater fall; on the other side, although he had renounced the theatre, he loved it still, the Jansenists had torn him from it, in spite of himself; a lady more austere, more rigid, than they, brought him back to his former inclinations. And when he considered the force of his genius, he found that it had not been fully displayed: he had yet written nothing but *Phædra*, and Corneille had wrote *Rodogune*, and *Héraclius*.

Despréaux earnestly intreated him to resist the demon of poesy: this demon pleaded with more force, and gained the victory. In the history of *Esther*, Racine found every thing that was necessary to please madame de Maintenon, without offending Anthony Arnauld: Despréaux, when he examined the subject, thought it so well suited to the time and place, that he now exhorted his friend to treat it, and to imitate in a regular performance the chorus of the Greek drama.

Madame de Maintenon was charmed with the first act; the history of *Esther* was her own, Moreau composed music for the chorus: Racine, who was as just an actor as he was an excellent poet, instructed the young ladies, and after many trials, found in madame de Caylus an admirable *Ahasuerus*; and in mademoiselle de Glapion a *Mordecai*, full of fire and expression: mademoiselle de Veillenne had the part of *Esther*, which suited with the gracefulness of her figure: mademoiselle d'Abancourt had that of *Haman*: mademoiselle de Marilly that of *Zerish*: and mademoiselle de la Maison-fort, whom the king called the agreeable cano-

ness, had that of Eliza. A splendid theatre was erected in Saint-Cyr; the dresses were magnificent, the decorations in the most elegant taste. Berin, decorator of the representations at court, had the management of this. The actresses rehearsed their parts twice before the king at Versailles.

[Feb. 8. 1689.] At the first representation, none but the principal officers, who attended the king in hunting, were admitted. Racine had made an excellent piece, and admirable actresses. Madame de Caylus, who sometimes played the part of mademoiselle de Saint Osmane, and sometimes that of mademoiselle de Lastic, appeared with inimitable grace in the character of Piety in the prologue, and afterwards in the part of Ahasuerus in the play. This innocent company seemed formed for those pious sentiments, which have since shocked us in the mouths of comedians. When an actress happened to be out in her part, 'Ah! mademoiselle, cried Racine, the play is ruined.'

At supper the king could talk of nothing, but Esther. The dauphine, the duke of Orleans, all the princes desired to see it, and this second representation pleased more than the first.

The prayer of Esther charmed the whole audience; all was grand, all was managed with dignity; the chorus was absolutely perfect; the prince, son to the duke of Orleans, was moved even to tears. In the first ardour of admiration, Esther was thought superior to Phædra, and the actresses to the Raisins and the Chammelés. The king told madame de Maintenon when he came away, that there wanted nothing but the ladies of Saint-Lewis, who, fonder of prayer than of dramattick representations, were most of them at church.

The third representation was designed for pious persons only, such as father de la Chaise, some bishops, and twelve or fifteen jesuits, with whom came madame de Miramion, and her most distinguished devotees. Madame de Maintenon was desirous of strengthening her mind against the scruples which she foresaw would be raised, 'to day, said she, they act only for the saints.'

'saints.' The saints applauded as well as others, and wished that all tragedies were like Esther.

The king took the courtiers with him, afterwards to see Esther, who heartily admired the piece and the performers. Madame de Maintenon was teized with solicitations, there was only room for two hundred spectators, and there were two thousand candidates for places.

A play at a convent became an affair of great importance at court; the secretaries of state quitted business of the utmost consequence to see Esther: the disgraced minister * was, after having seen it, received again into favour. Marshal d'Estrées † who had not applauded it, justified himself for his silence, as if it had been a crime: the court was in tumults, it was thought a distinguishing mark of favour to be permitted to see Esther, and all were emulous of it. The king made a list, as for the jourhies to Marly; he entered first and stood at the door, with the paper in one hand, and with the other holding his cane across, as if to form a bar, he continued there till all who were named had entered.

He would not suffer any of his train to leave their seats; and himself gave an example of modesty and reserve, suitable to the place. The lady portress was very handsome; the king thanked her for her civility, and no one durst make her a compliment upon her beauty. The actresses, less solicitous about their own persons, than those they were to represent, repeated behind the side scenes, the *Veni Creator*, to interest the Holy-Ghost in their success.

However they charmed the spectators. The duke de Villeroi became passionately in love with madame de Caylus, whose husband was almost choaked with admiration and jealousy: the marquis de Villette, but ill concealed his growing passion for mademoiselle de Marfily, who made him happy; and whom Bolingbroke afterwards rendered so unfortunate: mademoiselle de

* Monsieur de Pomponne.

† See Sevigné's letters:

Choisevil had thirty lovers, one of whom became her husband. The fine large eyes of mademoiselle de Saint Osmane, her glowing complexion, her enchanting air, excited in every breast sentiments which since ***** She was then solicitous to please no one but madame de Maintenon. But mademoiselle de Glapion, destined to despise the world, and to govern Saint-Cyr, entered into her part with so much judgment, that the actress was forgot, and the audience saw only Mordecai.

The king and queen of England were desirous of seeing the new play; the decorations were made more magnificent; the actresses were covered with jewels, and the orchestre was formed of the best musicians the king had in his service.

Racine was peculiarly happy in the choice of his subject; he imitated the ancients, who in their dramattick pieces introduced the events of their own time. Either was a representation of the court and the audience; yet without straining incidents, drawn from a book too respectable to be altered. He pleased in spite of Aristotle's rules, by versifying, as he said himself, those scenes which God had drawn.

No poet ever had a more brilliant pit. All that Europe had most great, Versailles most ingenious, Paris most elegant, were assembled there. He was seen upon the theatre with a countenance irradiated with modest joy. Despréaux at his side, smoothing his severe and jealous brow, and enjoying the fame of his friend.

Madame de Montespan and the marquis de Louvois, confounded in the croud, sought themselves with their eyes, and found themselves upon the scene, under the names of Vasthi * and Haman,

* Sans doute on s'a coaté la fameuse disgrâce
De l'altière Vasthi dont j'occupe la place :
Comment le roi contre elle enflammé de dépit,
La chassa de son trône ainsi que de son lit.
Mais il n'en peut si-tôt effacer la pensée :
Vasthi regna long-tems dans son ame offensée.

The

man, † ashamed of being seen in a place which aimed so mortifying a stroke at them, blushed while they joined in the applause. The king and queen of England, pleased to find the holy father, who had contributed to dethrone them, represented as a blind wretch, whose eyes * the devil had blinded. Lewis, a little confused at the impious complaint of piety, who pleaded with God the merit of his punctuality, and an extreme attention at the holy mass ‡ but charmed to acknowledge himself in the noble pride of a Persian king, in his love of justice, and his tenderness for Esther.

Madame de Maintenon seated on a stool at his side, attentive to all his questions, exposed to the looks of the whole audience, sustaining them with modest majesty, concealing under a declared satisfaction at the success of her novices, the joy she felt for applications so obliging.

I 4

The

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- ‘ The dire disgrace thou doubtless hast been told
 - ‘ Of haughty Vashti, whose high place I hold.
 - ‘ How the great king, indignant to have wed
 - ‘ Debas’d her from his throne, and from his bed.
 - ‘ But o’er his heart he no such conquest gain’d :
 - ‘ Long in that place of torment Vashti reign’d.’ E.

† To M. de Louvois was attributed a hint that had given rise to these verses :

Il sçait qu’il me doit tout, &c.

- ‘ To me he knows his all is due, &c. E.

* *Et l’enfer couvrant tout de ses voiles funèbres,
Sur les yeux les plus saints a jeté ses ténèbres.*

- ‘ Hell with her dismal veils o’ercasting all,
- ‘ On holiest eyes has made her darkness fall. E.

‡ *De ta gloire animé lui seul de tante de rois,
S’armé pour ta querelle & combat pour tes droits, &c.*

- ‘ Him only of the kings, thy glory fires :
- ‘ For thee he arms, and for thy cause aspires, &c.

Baiser avec respect le parvis de tes temples.

- ‘ With reverence to salute thy sacred courts.

The triumph of Esther was her own : she, said they, is that Esther, *who drew her days within the race prescribed*, who by her virtue alone has captivated a powerful monarch, who in retirement employed herself in cultivating *those young and tender flowers which she had transplanted*, and who, *weary of vain honour*, placed her highest glory in humility. Ahasuerus, never speaks to her of her beauty, and those enchanting graces, which Racine could so well describe ; his attention is fixed on qualities more estimable :

*Je ne trouve qu'en vous je ne sçai qu'elle grace,
Qui me charme toujours, & jamais ne me lasse :
De l'aimable vertue doux & puissans attrails.*

‘ In you alone, I must a grace admire,
‘ Which ever charms me, and can never tire :
‘ Of lovely virtue, sweet resistless power ! E.

At table he tells her :

*Oui, vos moindres discours ont des graces secretes :
Une noble pudeur à toute ce que vous faites
Donne un prix que n'ont point ni la pourpre ni l'or, &c.*

‘ Yes, secret sweets, your ev'ry word pursue :
‘ A gen'rous blush enhancing all you do,
‘ Reflects a lustre far above the throne :
‘ A pomp to purple, or to gold unknown. E.

The Jew who loved his ancient brethren, and durst not protect them, was madame de Maintenon, who with the gentlest disposition imaginable, suffered the protestants to be oppressed. The persecuted Jews, were the proscribed huguenots ; and the audience were bold enough to applaud this verse.

Et le roi trop crédule a signé cet édit.

‘ And so the cred'lous king the edict sign'd :’ E.

And this also :

On peut des plus grands rois surprendre la justice.

‘ The greatest, justest kings may be deceived.’ E.

The arts of adulation had so much exaggerated the king's attention and vigilance, the great Arnauld had been so generally accused of insolence, for having said, that

that Lewis the Great might be deceived, that this simple and immutable truth, was looked upon as an uncommon instance of presumption; many other applications were made, and many illusions were discovered in this tragedy, which the author, when he was writing it, never intended should be there; and which he did not perceive till after it was written.

Feb. 26.] This diversion continued till lent, which came very seasonably, to relieve madame de Maintenon, overwhelmed with glory, fatigue and pleasure.

The regulations of Saint-Cyr were not observed with less strictness, on account of this entertainment: the profest were as fervent, and as constant in their devotion, as if the play had been represented at a hundred leagues distance: they had a bench in the pit, separated from the rest; but they seldom appeared there.

Racine desired madame de Maintenon's permission to dedicate *Esther* to her; but she had so little taste for the most delicate praise, that she intreated him not to mention her, even in the preface. When *Esther* was printed, the charm was dissolved; it appeared cold to the reader; many verses insipid; too little action; the story too scrupulously followed; and the rules of art too much neglected. The edition, said the duke de la Feuillade, is a bill of review against the publick approbation.

Paris, offended that the court should appropriate this entertainment wholly to itself, criticised *Esther* with great severity. The friends of Racine in vain alledged, that this tragedy had pleased the nicest judges in the kingdom. At court they replied, there is but one suffrage necessary, that of him or her, whom all the rest are desirous of pleasing: 'Why, said Racine, why was I obliged to lay myself open to censure, why was I dissuaded from becoming a Carthusian friar? I should have been happier in that state;' however a thousand Lewis d'ors consoled him.

In the year 1721, the comedians acted *Esther*, and acted it but once; a great genius* concluded from

* Age of Lewis XIV. vol. the second, the Berlin edition.

from thence that the piece was very bad. Esther appeared no more, because it had appeared without the chorus; it was a woman who had been deprived of her finest ornaments. Esther tired the audience because it was played by persons who were not formed for it: had it been represented at Saint-Cyr, it would have excited the same fervor of admiration, as it had done at first: it required that amiable simplicity, those unaffected voices, those innocent minds for whom Racine composed it. Esther, which at the theatre of the Fauxbourg Saint-Germain, appeared but an indifferent performance, at the theatre of Saint-Cyr is a masterpiece.

‘The impartial publick, adds the same author, saw nothing in it but an uninteresting and improbable story, a stupid prince who had lived six months with his wife without knowing who she was, who without the least pretence for it, commanded a whole nation to be murdered, and with as little reason afterwards hanged his favourite.’

Nothing can be more unjust than this analysis of Esther; the publick saw not this, for the publick were christians. In Esther they were presented with an interesting and miraculous story, from a book admitted to have divine authority. They did not examine the probability of the action, because what is looked upon to be demonstrated is never examined. Paris, with regard to Esther, was in the same circumstance as Athens with regard to Iphigenia, whose place was supplied by a heifer; or as any other dramatick piece, in which, after the action is miraculously conducted, the catastrophe is wound up miraculously likewise. It was sufficient for the French as well as the Grecians, that a play founded upon a religious subject was conformable to their notions of theology.

However that may be, the king was so well pleased with Esther, that Racine had orders to compose another piece for the following year. He excused himself on account of the few leisure hours which the writing his majesty's history left him. This excuse was not admitted, the real cause of the poet's reluctance to obey

was

was the difficulty of finding in the holy history a subject equally happy. Madame de Sevigné did not think it possible; but in the fourth book of Kings, Racine found an action interesting, and fruitful enough of incidents, to make love, confidants, and episodes unnecessary. The extreme simplicity of the story he repaired by the elegance of the poetry, and the want of some great passion, by the justness of the sentiments, and the happy use of those sublime expressions with which the scripture abounds. He read his performance to madame de Maintenon, and when he came to this verse:

Elle flotte, elle hésite, en un mot elle est femme :

‘ She wavers, hesitates, is woman still.

E.

She could not help expressing some little displeasure, which shewed that she was still too much a woman herself.

Monsieur Durand, superiour of the gentlemen of Saint Lazare, shook his head when he heard Athaliah rehearsed, and declared, that he would write and preach against this amusement. The musician assured the rigid censor, that Athaliah was a holy piece, and opposed to his arguments the licence that had been given for the theatre at the fair at Saint-Laurent, which his society had caused to be built for scenes less decent. Fear depressed the minds of the novices, and made them languid in their task: they rehearsed Athaliah without taste; they learned without emulation the Jephthah of Boyer, and the abbé Têtu. Racine was offended at this coldness, and maintained that his play was calculated to inspire virtue.

The missionary proved to him, that to be the author of a tragedy, however pious it might be, was a crime sufficient to damn him: Racine took his word for it, and would have burnt Athaliah as a piece unworthy of a good christian, if madame de Maintenon had not repressed this whim: so certain it is, that sometimes no one can be more ridiculous than a man of wit.

Hebert,

Hebert, rector of Versailles, strenuously opposed these innocent * amusements at an assembly of the ladies of charity, which madame de Maintenon regularly attended: the discourse before the conference, turned upon the tragedy of Esther. Flattery improved upon the praises that truth had bestowed: the rector groaned and impatiently waited for an opportunity to speak. Madame de Maintenon, with an air of satisfaction, repeated the names of all the religious, who had either been spectators, or desired to be so. 'You, monsieur, said she to the rector, are the only one who have not seen this piece, but shall we not see you there soon?' Hebert, only replied by a profound bow: madame de Maintenon, in answering the energetick silence of the rector, said, 'Father de Chamilly of the oratory, venerable for his years and piety, has solicited a place in our pit: I would have you, pursued she, looking at Hebert, go there to day in such good company.' I beg you will dispense with my obedience, madam, said Hebert, and immediately began his exhortation.

When it was over, the dutchess de Chevreuse and madame de Beauvilliers chid the rector for so publicly denying to go. 'You have mortified madame de Maintenon extremely, said they, to see Esther is a favour solicited with ardor. 'You are invited, and you refuse with the air of a person who disapproves of this amusement. You will no longer be confided in as usual. You will be thought to carry severity of morals to an extravagant length. You will be dreaded as the censor of bishops, and by losing your interest in the court, your zeal will be less effectual.'

'My reasons, interrupted the rector, are not founded upon vain and ridiculous scruples. I will lay them before you, and make madame de Maintenon judge of them herself; if after hearing them, she

* Manuscript memoirs of Hebert bishop of Agen, from page 212, to page 237.

‘ she condemns me, I will comply with her request and see Esther.’

That very evening he said to her, ‘ You know, madam, the great respect I have for you, you also know with what earnestness I declaim in the pulpit against theatrical representations. Esther is not comprehended in this prohibition.’ ‘ Why then, interrupted madame de Maintenon, do you refuse to see it?’ ‘ The people, replied the rector, know no difference between this play and another. If I go, they will be guided rather by my actions than my words. The character of a minister of Jesus Christ is too delicate, too respectable to be sacrificed to complaisance or curiosity. Consider, madam, consider, whether it is decent for priests to be present at a play, performed by young agreeable women fixed in their view for two whole hours? It is exposing them to temptations; many of the courtiers have owned to me, that their passions were more raised by the sight of these young girls, with all that amiable simplicity in their manners, than by the most alluring arts of the actresses: virgin-innocence is a more powerful attractive than the studied graces of prostituted beauty: vice profanes every thing that it approaches.’

‘ However, said madame de Maintenon to him, you do not condemn those amusements, so advantageous to youth.’ ‘ I think, replied he, that they ought not to be admitted into any system of good education, the great ends of your establishment, madam, is to form your novices to purity of manners. Will not this purity be destroyed by exposing them upon a theatre to the eager gazing of the whole court? Will it not banish that modest shame which retains them in their duty? Will a young woman be apprehensive of a private interview with a man, after having appeared without confusion before many? The praises, which the spectators lavish upon the beauty and genius of these young persons, suggests sentiments of pride, and gives them a desire to please: even I, in the exercise of a function which incessantly opposes the passions, cannot defend myself from a secret pride
of

of preaching before my sovereign ; how then should children repress a vanity so natural ?

‘ Yet these exercises, said madame de Maintenon, have in all times been authoris’d in colleges : ’ ‘ no inference, replied the rector, can be drawn from thence in favour of such exercises in the schools of girls. Boys are destined to fill employments which oblige them to speak in public : to an ecclesiastic, a lawyer, a soldier, the art of declamation is equally necessary. Girls are designed for retirement ; timidity is in them a virtue ; modesty is their highest fame. I do not speak of the time wasted in getting their parts, of the ideas rais’d by the insinuating charms of verse, of the pride of those who play, of the envy of those who are excluded from it, of the lofty airs which they assume upon the theatre, and which they cannot quit in society, and of many other things contrary to the nature of your establishment. Permit me to make one observation more, all the convents of the kingdom have their eyes fixed upon Saint-Cyr. The example given by Saint-Cyr will be followed every where. They will be weary of acting pious pieces : they will, for the future, act profane ones : they will invite the laity to these representations. The convents now instead of forming novices, will give actresses to the stage.’

‘ All this seems very reasonable, said madame de Maintenon, but St. Francis du Sales, is not so rigid as you ; he permits his daughters to represent religious drámas.’ ‘ It is true, replied he, but this great saint permitted it but seldom, and then only among themselves, and in the inmost recesses of the monastery ; at the convent of the visitation they are private amusements ; at Saint-Cyr they are public entertainments.’

Madame de Maintenon was staggered by these reasons, but the abbé Gobelin, monsieur Fenelon, messieurs Tiberge, and Brisacier approved of Esther ; the abbé Desmarais had not condemned it, and it was determined that Athaliah should be acted. The devotees and the wits were alarmed at this news, the former through piety, the latter through envy. Ma-
dame

dame de Maintenon was told, that it was indecent to produce her niece and other young girls, assembled from every province in the kingdom, upon a theatre, and that such diversions suited but ill with the idea which had been conceived of the establishment of Saint-Cyr. Anonymous letters were written to her, full of malignant satire, under the appearance of zeal for religion; they accused Racine of jansenism, and asked her if she was desirous of infecting her house with that heresy.

The sanctity of the place, the pious subjects of the dramas, the manner in which the spectators were introduced at Saint-Cyr, in the train of the king, justified it sufficiently*. She would have despised these censures, founded upon envy or mistaken zeal, but the arguments of Hebert, supported by the abbé Desmarais, made a great impression upon her. *Athaliah* was acted twice in the dresses of Saint-Cyr, in madame de Maintenon's apartment, at Versailles, before the king. The action did not appear less interesting; it even made a greater impression upon the spectators, than when debased by a *Jehosheba* covered with paint, an over-acted *Athaliah*, a high-priest, sinner, said madame de Caylus, to imitate the *Capucenades* of little father *Honore*, than the majesty of a prophet.

It was only at the solicitation of their Britannic majesties, that madame de Maintenon permitted a more magnificent representation of *Athaliah*. Father de la Chaise, Fenelon, and several other ecclesiastics, sanctified it by their presence. Madame de Maintenon intreated the bishop of Chartres to be there. Fenelon, his colleague and his friend, could not prevail upon him. While *Athaliah* was acting, the bishop gave the ladies of St. Lewis a discourse upon the deplorable condition of christians, who indulged themselves before lent in such scandalous pleasures, and upon the necessity of making reparation for their fault, by retirement and exercises of piety.

Racine

Racine was now intirely disgusted with the theatre, he declared that he would write nothing more but the king's history, but whether he feared that he should be accused of ingratitude, if he confined himself to truth, or of flattery, if he was not severe; whether he wanted materials, or that he thought it beneath him to put the gazettes or the reports of the court into elegant language: he went on but slowly with his work, which, fortunately for his fame, was consumed in a fire.

Valincour gave a Savoiard twenty Louis d'ors, to go and fetch it from the midst of the flames. The Savoiard instead of this valuable manuscript, brought a collection of the gazettes of France. These gazettes, the memoirs of the time, the collection of original pieces, Dangeau's journal of the news of the court, that part of the age of Lewis the XIVth, upon arts, the writing of several officers upon military affairs, the negotiations of some ambassadors, the acts of congresses, the letters of monsieur de Torcy and the prince des Ursins on the affairs of Spain, may console the curious for their loss: at least they have no reason to regret the style of Racine and Boileau, whose prose had nothing extraordinary in it, or that of Valincour, a writer of no eminence.

Racine wrote some cantata's for the use of Saint-Cyr, which shew that his genius was not turned for lyric poetry. One of them was performed before the king, who, at these verses,

*Mon Dieu ! quelle guerre cruelle !
Je trouve deux hommes en moi.
L'un veut que plein d'amour pour toi,
Je te sois sans cesse fidelle :
L'autre à tes volontés rebelle,
Me soulève contre ta loi.*

' My God ! what cruel strife !
' I find two men in me ;
' One full of love and life,
' Would faithful prove to thee.

' The

' The other rebel to thy will,
' Against thy law excites me still. E.

said to madame de Maintenon, ' Ah ! madam, I well know these two men.'

When *Athaliah* was printed, more eagerness was shewn to condemn than to read it ; the public thought that a play in which a child was the principal character was only fit for children. Racine was convinced that he had failed in the choice of his subject. Madame de Maintenon was the only one who confidently maintained that it was excellent. With genius, true taste expired : persons superior to their age, are always erroneously judged by it : how was it possible for Racine to please a nation that had been charmed with *Campistron* ?

When the regency had restored the national genius to its vigor, which had been depressed by the gloominess of devotion, *Athaliah* appeared again, and was received with the highest applause ; they found allusions in it, they made applications. In *Jehoash*, saved by the high-priest, and by *Jehosheba*, the people saw their king preserved by a bishop, and by madame de Ventadour : *Abner* was *Villeroi*, and so of the rest. Racine's family were extremely surprized that the comedians durst presume to act a play, the privilege of which was only granted to the ladies of Saint Lewis : and madame de Maintenon expressed her astonishment, that the archbishop of Paris did not oppose a representation which he had looked upon as profane. The preceding year the magistrates of Amsterdam had shewn themselves more severe and more prudent ; they prohibited the French comedians from representing *Athaliah*, as being, in their opinions, a parody upon the holy wrings ; *Phædra* they regarded as a lesson of morality, and *Athaliah* as an insult upon the majesty of religion.

Notwithstanding the unjust prejudices of the public, *Athaliah* has been acted at court by the dutchess of Burgundy, the duke of Orleans, the countess d'Ayen, mademoi-

mademoiselle d'Osmond, and other ladies. Madame de Maintenon introduced these ingenious amusements, because she thought they might be of use to the young princess, and afford some relief to that languor which stole upon the king, whose heart, though worn out with pleasures had not lost its sensibility; he loved the fine arts, but even this taste the austerity of devotion condemned.

Madame de Maintenon as pious, tho' less rigid, always patronized genius; the abbé de Choisy, Dutché Rousseau, the abbé Têtu, the abbé Pelegrin wrote for Saint-Cyr, and were generously rewarded by her. To her we owe Judith, Jephthah, Absalom, and the sacred odes.

Among all the men of wit in her time Racine was most in her taste. The poet repaid her preference with the most unfeigned esteem, 'I know not, he often said, a woman of greater virtue.' She procured the post of gentleman in ordinary for him.* 'I love to see him, said she, he has in his manners and discourse all the simplicity of innocence: I can read Boileau, and that is all, he is too much of a poet.' However she was praised in the satire upon women, where Boileau says that he knew one:

*Humble dans les grandeurs, sage dans la fortune,
Qui gemit comme Esther de sa gloire importune.*

* In grandeur humble, and in height sedate,
* Who groans like Esther under glorious weight.

ELPHINSTON.

He had her also in view when he speaks of a lady,

*Qu'à l'église jamais devant le Dieu jaloux,
Un fastueux carreau soit au sous ses genoux.*

* Who will not that the jealous God shall see,
* A pompous cushion sink beneath her knee.

ELPHINSTON.

But

* Manuscripts of the bishop of Agen.

But, as imprudent in his conversation as unjust in his writings, he was continually throwing out some satirical hints against her first husband, who she was not willing should ever be mentioned before the king or her. One day when he was railing at burlesque poetry, he added, 'Thank heaven this taste is now over, and Scaron is no longer read even in the provinces.'

Racine instantly changed the conversation and as soon as they were alone; 'It is impossible, said he to him, to go with you to court, yesterday Don Japhet was the subject, to day Virgil travestie: are you ignorant of her concern in your raillery?' 'No, answered Boileau, but when I see her, it is the first thing that I forget.'

Madame de Maintenon often spoke of her husband, and even extended her benefactions to some of his relations, but she never pronounced his name.* 'When I was with that man, she used to say, and generally; 'When I attended that poor cripple.'

This reserve was mean and ridiculous without doubt, but she owed it to the king. Whatever was great in her conduct, proceeded from herself; all that was little her situation subjected her to. It was her love for publick good that made her desire Racine, to draw up a memorial representing the distress of the people. It was her obedience to the king, that made her name the author to him, notwithstanding her promises to the contrary. Lewis enraged that his historian had examined into the faults of his administration, forbid her ever to see him again.

Madame de Maintenon saw Racine once more, but it was only to take leave of him. Hence the melancholy that oppressed him, hence a violent fever and a swift decay. Hence his extreme disgust for Versailles, where he no longer saw her who made his residence there agreeable. His disgrace took up all his thoughts, he sought to discover his crime, he found it not, and made it by his imprudence weary of Versailles; he indulged his

* *Memoirs of madame de Bouju.*

his prevailing inclination that recalled him to Port-Royal, which he pretended to have abandoned for ever. He left the court secretly to go and visit his old friends and masters there. The king heard of it with indignation, for says Hébert, Jansenism was in his eyes the greatest of vices : madame de Maintenon durst no longer speak to the king of a man that was become odious to him. Racine's grief and too late regret shortened his days ; a poet so tender must necessarily die of exquisite sensibility. The king, during his last sickness, often sent to know how he did, but being informed that Racine had in his will desired to be interred at Port-Royal, he expressed no concern for his death. After this let us praise kings, and depend upon friends at court.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

The king visits Saint-Cyr.

THE king's affection for Saint-Cyr suffered no abatement, nothing soothed him more than the praises of this establishment. He gave a distinguishing reception to Trevisani a roman prelate, who, when he saw the house, had said : ' The fathers of the church have tortured their imaginations in vain about the grandeur of the *fiat*, which God pronounced when he created the world : if they were in my place, they would find it difficult to conceive that the *fiat* of a mortal produced all this.'

The king went himself to deliver to the ladies of Saint-Cyr the bull for uniting the revenues of the abbé of Saint-Denis to their house. The pope when he granted it, said twice to the duke de Chaulnes, ' when you write to madame de Maintenon, assure her that I grant this through my esteem for her.'

The king thought it necessary upon this occasion to declare his intentions again. ' In this establishment,' said he, ' my only views have been the glory of God, the advantage of my kingdom, and the relief of my

‘ my noblesse. ‘ I conjure the community,’ added he, addressing himself to the ladies, and afterwards settling his looks upon madame de Maintenon, ‘ to second these views, by confirming themselves daily in true piety, and by strictly observing the ordinances of their institution; I shall then suffer no uneasy apprehension concerning the education of the young ladies, for whom this establishment was formed. This design will be accomplished, if the ladies are perfect in their vocation, or at least if they persist in endeavouring to become so.’

It is impossible, said madame de Maintenon, but that they must become excellent nuns, after having a king for their preacher.

It does not belong to me, answered the king, to enter into a minute detail of their duties, but I hope that by often repeating to them my motives for this establishment, I shall render them faithful to those duties. I hear every day accounts of the ladies which give me great satisfaction, and I shall not spare either my visits or my discourse, if I can be of any use to them.

Madame de Maintenon gave him some instances of the great piety of the ladies professed, and of the young ladies. ‘ I am not surprised,’ replied the king, ‘ to find these virtues in ladies who have consecrated themselves to God, but I admire them in children; I was desirous that great good might be done here, it is, and my vows are granted.’

‘ You do not then sigh, repent of the great expence of this building,’ said madame de Maintenon. ‘ Ah!’ replied the king, if it were to be done again, I would do it with the utmost chearfulness.

‘ We dare not flatter ourselves,’ resumed madame de Maintenon, ‘ that among so many persons of different dispositions and of every rank, that there are none who will deviate from the virtue with which we endeavour to inspire all, but it will be difficult even for these, with such principles engraved upon their hearts, not to feel their influence, and be again brought back

to

to their duty, and certainly the greater number will live in innocence. ' Oh ! that I could give God, ' said the king, fighting, as many souls, as my example has snatched from him.'

Three of the young ladies having been attacked by that disease, which is cured by the touch of our kings ever since the priests have communicated to them the art of working miracles, the king desired to see them in private. Bontems introduced them into his closet: the patients kneeled; the king entered alone, he looked attentively upon them, then raising his eyes to heaven, he uttered a fervent prayer, and putting his hand upon the cheek of each he said, *I touch thee; God cure thee!* The next day, adds Manteau, she who was most violently afflicted with the distemper, was cured without any assistance; so easy it is for the imagination to perform miracles, or for bigotry to believe them.

CHAPTER XL.

The absolute vows.

MADAME de Maintenon grew daily more pious, she acquired that severity of manners highly necessary for the foundress of a religious house. Her own aversion to the world, persuaded her that it was easy to renounce it, and having disengaged herself from it as much as her situation would permit, she required her daughters to make the same sacrifice. Already some of them resigning themselves to the fervor of their devotion, complained that their institution was not austere enough, and entered among the Carmelites. Saint-Theresa deprived the community of persons, who were particularly qualified for the education of the novices. Madame de Maintenon was apprehensive that after her death, the devout would embrace an order more perfect, and that such as were weary of their present state would be disgusted with one, that would subject them to a still greater restraint.

The

The ladies united only by a common way of life, and a uniform habit, might enter the world again with the dispensation of the bishop. She was afraid that the regulations would be less strictly observed, that the see of Chartres might be filled by a court prelate, that her house would be unpeopled, the young ladies less carefully educated, that the prince would no longer continue his benefactions to a house which varied from its first principles, and that if the revenues should be attacked, the parliament would cease to protect a community useless to the state. Such were madame de Maintenon's fears, which augmented every day.

An estate fell to a lay sister in the community of Saint-Cyr, the conditional vows did not render her incapable of inheriting; some of her relations disputed her right, others persuaded her to enforce it. The lay sister chose to renounce the inheritance. It was probable however that her example might not be imitated, and this liberty destroyed disinterestedness, by leaving a property intended to be excluded.

The ladies had been suffered to believe that solemn vows had the force of absolute vows. Some of them now learned with joy, others with grief, all with extreme astonishment, that these vows could only be binding by conforming to the rules anciently instituted and approved by the church. Some of the professed, weary of their condition, had an inclination to return to the world; they listened to the advice of persons who were interested in their return to it, and seemed to perform their duties like persons who performed them against their will.

Madame de Maintenon was afflicted by the murmurs, the arguments, and sentiments of some of the ladies; to hinder them from wavering, she was desirous of establishing a body of directors, whose piety and wisdom would give her a security, that after her death Saint-Cyr would be at least well governed in spiritual affairs.

For this purpose she assembled her council, which was composed of Messieurs de Fenelon, Desmarais, Tiberge, and Brisacier, who all advised her to give the direction of Saint-Cyr to the priests of Saint-Lazarus.

zarus. These priests were preferred as being ecclesiasticks, who were all of one mind, with regard to the principles of religion, and enforced their doctrine by frequent conferences upon morality: they were likewise pious, humble and disinterested. A new building was added to Saint-Cyr for their accommodation. Madame de Maintenon, being asked, why she did not make choice of the jesuits? 'Because, replied she, I am resolved to be mistress in my own house.'

The ladies of the community were again alarmed by the discussion of their vows: the bishop of Chartres, full of a holy zeal, represented to them that absolute vows were necessary to confirm their order, that the title of the abbey of Saint-Denis could not be securely suppressed but in favour of a religious house, that other princes, other ministers might be prevailed upon to restore it, that a community authorised by the holy see would be less subject to revolutions. He went to declare to the ladies, that their vows being conditional they were under a necessity of choosing one of the ancient orders of the church, and that of these Saint Augustin was the best.

This discourse appeared very harsh to the ladies of Saint-Lewis, they looked upon the change that was proposed to them as a novelty, which equally attacked their consciences, their ordinances, and method of life. The bishop of Chartres filled their minds with doubts and inquietudes: madame de Maintenon appeared again, and restored them to peace.

The king disapproved of this change as much as the ladies; he revered the piety of cloisters, without honouring the dress and other regulations, which better prove the extravagant notions of those who instituted them, than the resignation of those who submitted to them; to this was added, an extreme dislike of every thing that was new. To madame de Maintenon's proposal he answered, 'But what will be thought of this change? They will ridicule us, they will say, that we know not what to fix upon, that every year will present a new scene, and other alterations will be always expected.'

Madame

Madame de Maintenon, although determined upon a change, would not too suddenly oppose the king's inclinations ; she left it to time and reflection to shew him the justness of those reasons which she had laid before him, with that seeming indifference and submission with which that authority is always pleased. At length the king was convinced, and thus nobly expressed his intentions : ' we will then make a convent, ' let it be said, that we took our measures with little ' judgment before ; let the people find fault with e- ' very thing ; as for us, without being moved with idle ' censures, we will go on, and carry our work to great- ' er perfection.'

At this news all the ladies were alarmed. The novice was what most terrified them. They were apprehensive of being dismissed. They looked upon this new examination, as a pretence to exclude them. Their directors assembled to deliberate upon the alterations that were to be made in the ordinances. The ladies said that they might spare themselves the trouble of altering them, and they must propose the innovations in a full chapter. Madame de Maintenon soothed them by giving them the king's picture and her own. She promised them that they should be permitted to retain their habit : this was one of the most important articles. The elder professed shewed as much reluctance to take another, as submission to all the austerities they were resolved to impose upon them.

The council was again summoned, and the secret carefully kept, for fear of alarming the ladies who might have united to break the measures which were taking against them. The theologians had a conference, they could not agree ; they were disgusted with each other, and could only persuade the lay sisters to comply, who first shewed the change in their institution by the alteration of their habit.

Notwithstanding the opposition made by the ladies, the council drew up a petition, in which the professed intreated his holiness to permit them the absolute vows. It was necessary that the whole community should sign it, part of which would not suffer it to be mentioned :

the directors employed all their skill, but the more they urged the necessity of this change, and the perfections of a monastick life, the more the ladies trembled at their unworthiness. Some desired time to consider of what was proposed to them ; many offered with tears to follow blindly the advice of their benefactress ; others durst not speak, and this affecting silence distressed madame de Maintenon.

She now resolved never to treat this affair but in private interviews, with such as were favourable to her designs, and with the familiar air of conversation with all the rest. This method succeeded so well, that the most rebellious submitted ; this seeming disinterestedness removed all their suspicions ; worldly interest which mixes itself with the most holy designs to corrupt and profane them, had a part in this ; the ladies thought their compliance might be useful to their relations, and sacrificed themselves a second time for the happiness of their families. They were bound by deeds, upon which they were not consulted, the original of their ancient constitutions was taken from them, and they were deprived of other writings which might have justified their resistance.

Father Bourdaloue to conciliate all, proposed that both conditional and absolute vows should be established : the former till the age of thirty, the latter for such as were willing to take them. This regulation, which was borrowed from the jesuits, an order remarkable for the wisdom of its ordinances, was favoured by father de la Chaise, relished by the king, and approved by madame de Maintenon, but rejected by the bishop, too pious to be sensible how ridiculous it was in an enlightened age, to permit children to dispose of their liberty, and at all times how imprudent and severe to trust the happiness of their whole lives to promises made in a transient fervor of devotion.

Cavallerini, after having had his first audience of the king, went to Saint-Cyr, accompanied by Saintot, master of the ceremonies. He there told madame de Maintenon, that his holiness had commanded him twice in full audience to assure her of his esteem : he delivered

vered to her a brief very glorious for her, which she would have buried in oblivion, if the datary's office in Rome had not sent copies of it into France. When it was published, it was unanimously allowed to be to her equal to a contract of marriage: for whatever propensity may be supposed in the court of Rome, to effect pious purposes, by resources the most profane, a pope never supplicates the mistress of a king.

After the first compliments were over, the nuncio added, that the holy father expected from her zeal for religion, that she would employ her interest with the king to accommodate the differences which might still remain between his majesty and the holy see, and that she would by her good offices contribute to the peace of christendom. She replied, that her attachment to the king, would not permit her to entertain any other sentiments than those he attributed to her, that she did not think herself worthy of those which the pope was pleased to entertain of her, and that she was extremely rejoiced to find that a nunciature of such great importance was confided to a prelate of such distinguished merit, that he would be sensible of the king's piety by viewing Saint-Cyr, of his good intentions by his discourse, and of his love of peace by his whole conduct.

The next day, the nuncio sent her the pope's presents, which consisted of trifles for the toilet, and a curious shrine filled with the bones of a Deodatus, or God-given, which had been lately dug up in the catacombs of Rome.

1692.] The veneration of the professed for madame de Maintenon was increased by this visit; they reflected upon every circumstance of it, and all filled them with astonishment. Madame de Maintenon distributed among them the chapelets and perfumes sent by the pope, and these presents were serviceable to her designs, which she pursued with the most unwearied application. For fifteen days successively, she set out from Versailles at five o'clock in the morning, came to Saint-Cyr before prayer-time, and often wakened the community.

She composed discourses full of that spirituality which is not imbibed in a court: during a whole month

she assisted at all the exercises ; the professed durst not complain of a yoke which she bore herself. They became more strict in the performance of their duties ; the sleeves were lengthened, the veils were lowered ; they avoided been seen by the visitors that resorted to Saint-Cyr : devotion was carried to excess, and they signed the petition. Cardinal Janson presented it to the pope, who said to him, ' We can refuse nothing to the *king's lady*.' The brief arrived, and permitted them to preserve their habit, and not to take the so much detested monastick dress.

Madame de Loubert, at that time superior of the community, gave the example of humility, and was the first that entered into all the exercises of the noviciate. There was a necessity for having mistresses worthy of such novices. Madame de Maintenon fixed upon the daughters of the visitation at Chaillot. She had a high veneration for the founder of that order ; throughout all his epistles she found instructions wonderfully effectual in bringing back souls to God. She often said, that the character of Saint Francis de Salles was that amiable charity which steals upon the affections, and that he persuaded mortals to renounce themselves, although he required no extraordinary acts of devotion.

Madame Priolo then governed Chaillot with great reputation. Madame de Maintenon proposed to her to form Saint-Cyr. After many denials from this nun, and many more from her convent, madame de Maintenon went in the king's coach to fetch her from Chaillot, and carried her in triumph to Saint Cyr, where all the professed, except madame d'Auzy who returned to the world, began their noviciate.

The king honoured her who conducted it with a visit : he congratulated madame Priolo upon her first success, and spoke to her several times in private. He said to the mistress of the novices, who declared she was greatly edified with so many good examples : ' All that I desire of them, is to follow yours.' He enquired for madame de Loubert, who had lately resigned her place of superior : ' It is not easy to perceive her, said madame de Maintenon, she is always in the last place, and

‘ and the first in the lowest offices. In all conditions of life, replied the king, we ought to love to do that which others are commanded to do.’

Madame de Maintenon then presented a sheet of paper to him, and intreated him to write his intentions there. The king only wrote these words, *choose proper persons, and faithful to the rules*. Madame Priolo told him, that many of the young ladies desired to be admitted to their noviciate. ‘ It is necessary, said the king, that they should desire this as a favour, and that the most worthy be chosen.’ ‘ Sire, resumed madame de Maintenon, you recommend this precept strongly.’ ‘ Yes, added the king, the choice of proper persons, and a faithful observance of the laws, is the whole system of all governments.

‘ If your designs are accomplished, Sire, said madame Priolo, Saint-Cyr will produce eminent virtues; the world will have the advantage of them, and your majesty will have done great good.’ ‘ It is just, answered the king, that I should do good here, to repair the evils I have done elsewhere. Adieu, ladies, added he, your time is very precious, I am not willing to interrupt your exercises.’ ‘ Your Majesty, said madame de Maintenon, will be a good overseer, for you are very exact and even severe.’ ‘ Yes, replied the king, and without constant vigilance the best societies will degenerate from their first rules.’

The mistresses and the novices fulfilled the desires and expectations of the king. The ladies of the visitation admired in the ladies of Saint Lewis more perfections than they were able to give them. The noviciate lasted a whole year, yet did not interrupt the education of the young ladies. The care of it was confided to the daughters of the society of father Barré. Mademoiselle Balbien served as general mistress of the classes, and madame de Maintenon directed all.

1694.] After the ladies had made profession, madame de Fontaine was elected superior. Madame de Loubert had entered into the noviciate with fervor, and performed it with edification; but either through an aversion for being superior, or that she apprehended the

consequences of a more strict engagement, she did not take the solemn vows, but intreated madame de Maintenon to suffer her to remain in the community, where she imitated the devotion of those whom she was not able to imitate in renouncing the world.

The king honoured the new superior with his advice, and the ladies of Chaillot with his praises. One of the nuns wrote an account of this visit. I shall give the conversation that passed in it here, although there is not much variety in it, because there are a thousand persons who are curious to hear a king speak, and a hundred thousand curious to hear this king. He entered the hall with madame de Maintenon; he desired the ladies to sit, and after thanking madame Priolo for her care of them, he addressed himself to madame de Fontaine in this manner.

‘ I judge of your capacity for the place of superior
 ‘ of this community, by the choice which the bishop
 ‘ of Chartres, madame Priolo, and madame de Main-
 ‘ tenon have made of you. They are good judges of
 ‘ merit; I do not doubt but you will fulfil their hopes
 ‘ and expectations; and you, madam, well know how
 ‘ to unite a firmness in maintaining what has been late-
 ‘ ly established, with a gentleness necessary in all new
 ‘ institutions. The ladies will shew by their readiness
 ‘ to obey, that they have voluntarily resigned them-
 ‘ selves to God, and their piety will be conformable to
 ‘ this regularity which I so greatly admire. We ought,
 ‘ in every state of life, to aspire towards perfection;
 ‘ you, ladies, will reach it in your steady adherence to
 ‘ that you are placed in.’

Madame Angelica de Beauvais, a nun of the visita-
 tion, daughter to a woman of the bed-chamber to Anne
 of Austria, with whom he had been in love in his
 youth, and now secretary to madame Priolo, expressed
 great surprize to find the king so well acquainted with
 the duties of a monastic life. ‘ Whenever you please,
 ‘ said the king to her, I will have a conference with
 ‘ you, which I will support very well; you will sup-
 ‘ port it better, for your vocation has been good: the
 ‘ queen my mother opposed it. You have well con-
 tinued

‘tinued what you have well begun ; it is a great happiness to give ourselves to God from our earliest years.’

He afterwards mentioned his design of fixing the number of the ladies of the choir to thirty-six : ‘But I can easily comprehend, said he, that so large a house will require more. It will be more meritorious for the professed to serve themselves, than to be served by others. Obedience better suits a nun than command ; by doing what belongs to the lay sisters, you will acquire one virtue more. It is necessary that these places of a new creation should be well filled ; let the choice be made without partiality ; if we would do general good, self-interest must be laid aside. You, madam, said he to madame Priolo, have regulated every thing with so much judgment and prudence, that good order will necessarily be established ; every one is charmed with your conduct, and Noailles is a sincere admirer of Priolo ; he has spoke to me of your father, a man of letters, and of his history in Latin, which I do not understand ; for you well know, said he, to madame de Beauvais, that my childhood was neglected, and that I had not so good an education as I have established at Saint-Cyr.’ Then turning to madame de Maintenon, he added, ‘I hope the ladies of Chaillot will always assist the ladies of Saint Lewis with their advice.’ ‘Truly, Sire, said one of them, your Majesty has been very unjustly accused of hating the religious.’ ‘I hate them in the world, replied the king ; in their convents I love and honour them.’ He thanked the convent of Chaillot for the care they had taken of his numerous noviciate, and left them all charmed with his affability and goodness.

The reader has now seen by what steps Saint-Cyr has arrived to a fixed state, and has nothing now to apprehend from the levity and inconstancy of the human mind. The ladies of Saint Lewis subjected to the regulations of Saint Augustin, adore their vows, seeing in their ties the perpetuity of their house, and never cease to bless heaven for having inspired madame de Maintenon with the design of founding this institution, and for giving her abilities for securing it.

CHAPTER XLI.

Reports and Councils.

IT was publicly reported, and especially in foreign countries, where calumny and falsehood gain more easy belief, that madame de Maintenon was wholly employed in affairs of state; that she had changed the whole court by her cabals; that she had insisted upon a place in the council; that the dauphin had demanded of her, in very strong terms, by what title; that she was admitted, notwithstanding the opposition made by the princes and the ministers, and that the dauphin had shewn his dissatisfaction at it by retiring to Meudon. Prints were sold in which the king and madame de Maintenon were represented, their right hands joined, and each supporting with their left a globe, which seemed too heavy for the shoulders of Atlas, and these words beneath, *Nous Maintenons*.

Although there was not the least foundation for these reports, yet they continued to be propagated and believed, and the woman whose whole ambition was to make a saint of a king, was looked upon by us as another Frédégonde.

If madame de Maintenon had been desirous of governing, the king would not have suffered her: no prince was ever more jealous of his authority: the dominion Louvois attempted to exercise over him, was the ruin of this minister. The king perceived that madame de Maintenon had no inclination to give him counsel, and therefore thought her the more capable of giving him such as was good.

He had so high an idea of her judgment, that he once said to her, 'The title of Holiness is given to popes, that of Majesty to kings, to ambassadors that of Excellence, you ought to be stiled, your Solidity.' It was this solid judgment that kept her from meddling with affairs of state, and if she ever gave her opinion or hazarded her advice, it was in compliance with the
king's

king's desire, or at the sollicitation of her directors, more restless and more ambitious than herself.

Lewis seldom summoned his council: those meetings where opposition embroiled and protracted affairs, where different sentiments left every thing in doubt, must necessarily be disagreeable to him. He loved celerity in business: he hated debate, and would not listen to all, because he was desirous of seeing all, the state therefore was generally governed by a *half vizier-ship*: the ministers had each their days, and did business separately with him, and each was master of his particular department. As the bounds of their authority were exactly prescribed, they could not encroach upon each others rights: that eager desire for ruining one another was depressed: for if the method of reports hinders the prince from being enlightened, it also hinders the ministers from intriguing, therefore it seldom happened under this reign that one minister succeeded to another, tho' it has often happened since.

Louvois going one day to do business with the king when he was indisposed, madame de Maintenon who was in his chamber, prepared to leave him. The king prevented her, saying, ' Stay, madam, monsieur de Louvois knows that you may be trusted, and perhaps ' you may not be unuseful to us,' Lewis, assisted by the presence of madame de Maintenon, in whose eyes he always sought the approbation which he generally found there, discovered so much judgment that day, was so superior to Louvois, and so well satisfied with himself, that he resolved to have the same advantage often. He made use of madame de Maintenon as a curb to the tyranny of his ministers: Louvois and Seignelai murmured, the king was enraged, and to punish them, obliged them to do business in madame de Maintenon's apartment. The ministers united to oppose this innovation: we are debased, exclaimed they; that they were dependant was more certain.

The king, accustomed to be obeyed with cheerfulness, incapable of getting over a prepossession which he owed only to himself, firm against all obstacles, was

determined to give their jealousy some real exercise; and madame de Maintenon, who in these little councils was at first only as a companion to the king, or assisted as a witness to the debates, became soon more considerable.

The destiny of the state was decided in her apartment, the same which the count de Clermont possesses now. The ministers had no other fixed place for attending the king, who taking his place at a desk, made them give him a minute account of the affairs intrusted to their care. Madame de Maintenon used often to retire to pray. When she staid, she always placed herself in a corner of the room, and took her distaff or a book. When the king was embarrassed by any particular affair, he would endeavour to read in her countenance what resolution he ought to take; sometimes he would say, 'What does your solidity think of this?' or, 'Madam, does your solidity approve of this?' When the minister was obstinate, the king would appeal to her: *Let us consult wisdom*, he would say.

Madame de Maintenon did not love to mix in the business of the state, but she had a true genius for it; of which calmness, prudence, distrust, the love of justice, and a patriot zeal are essential parts. The king, who paid less regard to her inclinations than to her capacity, invited her every day to these conferences: she was therefore obliged to take some part in them, but she carefully avoided all debates, and never gave the least indication of that court spirit, which consists in aiming continually to impose upon persons from whom imposition is incessantly dreaded. It is for this reason that the court praised her less than the city, which is always the best judge, because it has less folly and fewer vices. At Versailles some said she made too great use of her interest with the king: others that she made too little: while at Paris, she was admired for her judgment and moderation, in keeping within the bounds of her rank.

Her letters shew with what reluctance she entered into the part they obliged her to act, and how little she enjoyed

enjoyed it, but we should not understand them in too strict a sense. We often deceive ourselves. Madame de Maintenon had two employments, that of converting the king, and of giving him necessary information. Without seeking it, she acquired a great influence in all affairs, by possessing all the confidence of him who regulated them.

A taste for the things of this world is not incompatible with the love of heavenly things. At church, in the oratory, at the feet of a crucifix, we give way to the overflowings of our hearts. We indulge the most exalted sentiments of piety : we trample the world and all that belongs to it under our feet. All that we write after a long meditation, in which the soul has conversed with God, and the imagination is inflamed by contemplating divine objects : all that we say, all that we think in those moments, shew such an absolute disengagement from the world, as makes us suppose we are incapable of entering into its divided interests. But when this transient fervor is past, we become mere mortals again, self-love, some predominant passion, curiosity, and perhaps the necessity of relieving the mind fatigued with devout aspirations, banish the resolutions we have taken. We are as cautious as designing, as penetrating as if we were not devotees : like cardinal Berulle, we hold the bible in one hand and Tacitus in the other : the most holy among the saints, said, as madame de Maintenon did, ‘ It is God who has placed us in this situation, let us endeavour to do as little ill as we can.’

Madame de Maintenon then entered into all affairs, because she understood them all. She governed much less indeed than she was thought, but more than she believed herself, and far more than she designed. Her empire was the empire of a sensible woman, calm, moderate, incurious, faithful, whose husband never consulted her, yet could not keep any secret hid from her.

The ministers, who knew better than herself the extent of her power, and who, by exaggerating and fearing it, had made it really superiour to their own,
informed

informed her beforehand of affairs which were to be laid before the king, conferred with her upon such as were nice and difficult, in order to secure the consent of the king to what they intended to propose, intreated her to support such advice as they proved to her to be best; and endeavoured to discover her sentiments with regard to promotions, the choice of persons for vacant employments, and many other things which are of no great consequence, and which the men in place suffer the courtiers and the people to look upon as the essential part of power. This conduct produced its natural effect, and rendered her still more moderate. *This is not in my power*, she would say to those whom the ministers directed to her: *these are affairs of state, in which I never concern myself*. This play of policy sent back all affairs and solicitations to the ministers, who had one reason more for regulating them as they thought fit, and for dispatching them more slowly.

The king would have admitted her to the council, but she refused that distinction; she appeared there twice, but either because she was less jealous of her authority than the king's honour, or that she feared a return of his distrust; for Lewis, tho' sometimes complaisant to her wishes, was always impatient of control, or that her candor was shocked by the mean uniformity of opinions there, she appeared to be greatly disgusted with it. 'They required secrecy of me,' said she, but the affairs under deliberation were of so little importance, they were discussed with so little attention, and with such apparent insincerity, that secrecy is more necessary for the honour of the ministers, than for the advantage of the business they were upon.'

She was often desired to be present at these consultations, but she had a greater ascendant over Lewis in private: sometimes she was his secretary, and sometimes he was hers.

A vast number of petitions were presented to her, which she laid before the king, who would sometimes
answer

answer them favourably, and sometimes he would say to her, ' I will not allow any one to speak to me ' about business but my ministers.'

These jealousies of authority were immediately atoned for by the most unlimited confidence. Madame de Maintenon received it like one who expected a return of his jealousy. Till she was accustomed to his denying her favours, she was greatly afflicted at it; but always persuaded that she was born for others, always severe to herself, she endeavoured to lessen her sensibility; and during six and twenty years no complaints ever escaped her. She desired every favour with extreme ardor, she was enraged at the least resistance, but she repressed her impatience, and stifled her murmurs. When the king named persons to fill vacant places, he always desired to know her opinion of the several candidates, but very seldom chose him whom she preferred to the others. Madame de Maintenon was at first surpris'd at this seeming contradiction; the king who suspected she was angry, would appease her by saying, ' Do you, madam, like any ' other better? let me know, you need only speak.' ' Sire, she replied, he who will serve you best, will ' best please me.'

On certain occasions she would venture to propose her friend, but always with an indifference that left the king entirely at liberty to admit or exclude him: at length she obtained every thing she desired, but it was by always seeming to desire nothing ardently. Her schemes for her friends had so often failed; the king was subject to such sudden vicissitudes of temper; so many affairs conducted with the utmost prudence, had succeeded ill from trifles, impossible to foresee, that she resolved no more to have any opinion or inclination of her own. When she was consulted upon any promotion, she laid the reasons that might be urged on both sides impartially before him; and the king, whose understanding was strengthened by the assistance he borrowed from hers, regulated affairs by her judgment, while he thought he was following his own.

Memorials against the ministers were often addressed to her: she was too candid to betray them, and had courage enough to offend them. She therefore gave these memorials to the king, and generally when they were present. When she discovered in the ministers any acts of injustice, any palpable falsehoods, she was at no pains to conceal her resentment, for she was not afraid of theirs; and believing it more honourable to be hated than to hate, she used to recal them to their duty by severe reprimands. None of them contested with her the right of taking a particular interest in the glory of the king and the happiness of his people. At court it is the mistress who is perfidious; the wife alone is importunate.

In all reports that were to be made to his majesty, the secretaries of state found a watchful spy in her, who retained them in their duty. She kept a journal of every thing that passed, that being well informed of each particular fact, when occasion required it, she could recal them all. This book rendered always present to her mind every circumstance of a design, dispersed in the several articles of different districts, and this combination made it easy for her to give the most proper advice. She would often, when concealed behind a curtain, interrupt her prayer or her work, to follow the discussion of an affair which excited her curiosity, or engaged her attention: and sometimes from the end of the closet a voice would proceed, which corrected the mistakes, or discovered the impositions of the minister. Madame de Maintenon entered not into these deliberations, but as a citizen, or as one to whose memory many facts of importance were committed.

The journal of Audiences was a secret between the king and her. When the report was made, they collected together the principal matters, and madame de Maintenon wrote the resolutions that had been taken, with the reasons for them. There also she placed an extract of such affairs as the minister was not employed in, and the news of the court, by
which

which the resolutions of the council were likely to be influenced. Lewis, who was the most laborious of kings, consulted these papers every day: he there saw with one glance the whole train of affairs, and even added in the margin, anecdotes or reflections of his own.

This valuable journal has probably had the same fate with many other papers which madame de Maintenon condemned to the fire. Unless monsieur de preserved it from thence, as he did a bag which contained the minutes of letters which the king threw there likewise, supposing them useless, but which this nobleman preserves in his cabinet as an indelible witness of the spirit, the understanding, and extreme application of Lewis the fourteenth.

CHAPTER XLII.

The works at Maintenon.

HOWEVER that may be, the marquis de Louvois was too restless, too active not to be weary of the slow windings, that all affairs were seen to take, and too haughty to cringe to a woman whom he had often seen a suppliant in his antechamber, resolved to conquer madame de Maintenon, and employ against his particular enemy what he should have employed against the enemies of the state, an immense sum of money, and thirty thousand men, and Vauban.

Versailles, which in the reign of Lewis the thirteenth was only a dog-kennel; had, by Colbert, been made a most enchanting place. Louvois, not contented with improving, was resolved to force nature. All the water was drawn from a pond by a pump, which raised it, and filled canals that distributed it into all the necessary places: but this water stagnated, and had an offensive smell: he therefore formed the design of bringing the river Eure to Versailles by an aqueduct which should conduct it from the mountain of Pirardon to the reservoirs. This design amazed all

all the engineers, who did not think it was possible to execute it, however Louvois compleated it, and the Eure ran twenty leagues against its course, to carry the abundance of its waters to the fountains of Versailles. A whole army was employed in these works, two mountains opposite to Maintenon, were joined together by eight and forty arches built for eternity. Of Pontgoin at Berschere, they made a canal of twenty thousand fathoms in length. This canal which was fifteen feet broad at the top as well as at the bottom, was twice as deep, and more, where the lowness of the ground, or the necessity of making proper banks required it. In the marshes of Berschere, they made a causeway or aqueduct of earth, which was carried by men, the length of 3607 fathoms to the aqueduct of brick built near Maintenon. Another was made in the marshes of Maintenon, two hundred and sixteen feet in height, through which the rivers of Eure and Gailardon passed. Three arches, raised, one upon another, as at Pont du Gard, equalled the astonishing works of the Romans; and the rapidity with which they were executed, seemed to partake of those miraculous works instantaneously produced by the gods of the enchanted world. With all these prodigies of art was the estate of madame de Maintenon embellished.

Madame de Maintenon entered into this scheme with all the ardour, with which she would have proposed it, if she had foreseen the inconveniencies it produced. The digging up the earth, the cutting of the stones, occasioned dangerous distempers among the workmen. Louvois still went on, his flinty heart could not be softened. 'Let them die, said he, by digging the earth before a fortress of the enemies, or by digging it in the plains of Beaufes: where is the difference? they die in the service of the king.'

Madame de Maintenon was exposed to the most outrageous murmurs. 'See, cried they, this boasted humility! Clagny exhausted the royal treasury, but
' Clagny

‘ Clagny was not cemented with the blood of the
‘ people. A whole army must perish at Maintenon :
‘ we hoped she would have corrected in the king, this
‘ inordinate passion for building, but she has joined
‘ with Louvois to sooth it. All who are about our
‘ masters are to be wicked, or become so.’

While madame de Maintenon was thus persecuted by the rage of calumny, she was endeavouring to prevent those misfortunes which laid waste her little empire, she distributed money among the soldiers, she ordered great care to be taken of the sick, and by her charity partly repaired the evils Louvois had been the cause of, through his desire to advance by some years the pleasures of his master.

The king’s parties at Maintenon lasted three days : he used to take none but his favourites with him, which occasioned great jealousy among the courtiers, and many murmurs against madame de Maintenon, to whom these odious distinctions were attributed. But she was unjustly censured, the smallness of the castle was the cause ; the king found it difficult to accommodate the few attendants he carried with him, and madame de Maintenon would not suffer the castle to be enlarged, either because she was desirous of avoiding disagreeable comparisons, or that she was afraid of the expence. There was nothing either rich or rare in the furniture : she had only to express a wish, and all that the Indies had most rich, France most elegant, and England most perfect, would have instantly adorned her house. The king’s frequent visit to it would have authorised this magnificence, but the finest apartment in the castle was hung with damask only, and she asked if that was not too rich, so great was her fear lest she should imitate the luxury of her own age : her moderation, her humility such, as may well make the present blush.

CHAPTER XLIII.

Knights of the Order of the Holy-Ghost.

MADAME de Maintenon, pleased with the works that were carried on upon her estate, was reconciled to Louvois, who had projected and conducted them. The minister was by this means master of the promotions to the order of the Holy Ghost. It was to consist of seventy-four knights, and had never been so numerous before. Louvois took upon himself the care of compleating this number : by which he proposed to oblige the ungrateful, and to pacify the malecontents.

Madame de Maintenon only recommended the count d'Aubigné, her brother, the marquis de Montchevreuil, and Villarceaux. No one was astonished that this honour should be bestowed upon the first ; but Villarceaux's passion for madam Scaron was remembered, and the malicious publick did not scruple to say, that he and Montchevreuil owed their promotion to the gallantries of madam Scaron ; the one for having talked of them, the other for having concealed them.

When the list was published, it was severely criticised. * But it is worthy remark, that France had so many men of distinguished merit, that a list as numerous might have been composed of those to whom the publick voice gave the honour of the order, and that seventy-four knights might have been named in the same day, who would not have debased it.

The

* *Le roi que sa bonté réduit à mille épreuves,
Pour soulager les chevaliers nouveaux,
En a dispensé vingt de porter des manteaux,
Et trente de faire des preuves.*

‘ The king, whose bounty tries each care,
‘ How best to ease the upstart knights ;
‘ Allows a score no clokes to wear,
‘ A score and ten to bring no rights.

E

The king offered the blue ribbon to the prince of Soubise, upon condition, that he would take rank after the dukes. The prince refused it, and desired that his refusal might be registred in the archives of the order. The dukes disputed with the family of Lorraine for precedence. The king said to them, 'I have read your memorial : I find that the princes of Lorraine have often preceded you ; if reason is for you, custom is against you.' 'There is one thing, said the duke of Luxembourg, which I am not able to conceive.' 'What is that ? said the king.' 'That a Bourbon,' replied the duke, can suffer a Guise in his presence.' The prince of Monaco consented to take rank as duke of Valentinois. The king praised his moderation, and the prince of Armagnac, and the count of Soissons blushed for not having imitated it.

CHAPTER XLIV.

The king and queen of England.

EUROPE was now threatened with a general disorder. The marquis de Louvois blew up every where the flames of war, that by giving the king employment, he might free himself from that dependence, to which, during peace, he had been obliged to submit : the re-union of the chambers of Metz and Bezançon, the invasion of Strasbourg and Casal, two fortified towns which belonged to Spain. The haughtiness with which the king had maintained the rights of exemption, which all other catholick princes had relinquished, as if he resolved to reign in the midst of Rome itself, had irritated all the European powers. A formidable league was formed against him, and it seemed highly probable, that the emperor, when he had subdued the Turks, would declare himself head of this league, and turn his arms against France. Louvois represented to the king, the necessity of preventing these dangers.

From the Hague, William of Orange carried on intrigues in every court of Europe. The battle of Saint Denis,

Denis, which was fought after the peace, was signed, had sufficiently shewn what was to be expected from him. Gourville having expressed his astonishment at this action, William, ever prodigal of human blood, told him, that he could not deny himself the satisfaction of giving this last lesson of his art.

I know not what our heroes will think of this speech, but if it be true, William was only fit to command an army of wolves, and to be devoured by them. He wrote to Lewis, and requested his friendship, and this was the king's answer to him: 'I have received the letter in which you desire my friendship: I will grant it you, when you are worthy of it, and with this hope, I beseech God to have you in his holy care.' When the prince read this letter, he said: 'I find I am not to have his friendship, well then, I will have his esteem.'

While James II. governed by a bigotted wife, and an inhuman chancellor, forbid a nation to profess the protestant religion, which had allowed him to be a catholic, the prince of Orange, his nephew, and his son-in-law, was invited into England by a powerful faction, and laid a scheme for making a descent there. The States-general refused to create a fund for the support of nine thousand sailors: the prince went to the assembly, and made this short speech: 'Gentlemen, we shall have a war next spring: I desire that this predication may be registered.'

The count d'Avaux * penetrated into all his designs, and

* See his *negotiations* printed by privilege at Paris in 1753. Although they might have spared this disgrace to our Dutch pensioners, and have prevented the publication of a book, which by unveiling all the mysteries of our policy, hinder us at present from putting the same springs in motion with equal success. A member of the States-general, corrupted by France, will for the future, sell his conscience at a higher price: he will say, that there can be no dependence upon the secrecy of our court, he will be apprehensive of being one day made

and discovered all his measures. Barillon discredited the advices sent by the count d'Avaux, who filled the king of France with real apprehensions, while Barillon lulled the king of England with false hopes. James, repeatedly warned by Lewis of the dangers that threatened his throne, thought himself securely fixed there: He continued his endeavours, to reunite his subjects to the Holy See; and the pope in the mean time gave two hundred thousand ducats to William, to secure the success of an armament, which was to destroy popery in England.

Oct. 1688.] The prince of Orange at length set sail with nine hundred protestant officers, whom he had distributed in the several battalions, and with marshal Schomberg, who was an army in himself. The elements seemed to declare against his enterprise. He was obliged to put into the ports of Holland. Innocent the eleventh, caused a thousand masses to be said for the happy voyage of the heretick, as if to pay a kind of homage to a religion which this Pontiff betrayed. At length the fleet landed at Torbay: England received William as its deliverer, and cast out James as its tyrant.

Seignelai had offered the king forty vessels, which might have been equipped soon enough to block up the Dutch fleet. Louvois opposed it, and insisted that it was more necessary to make a diversion. Instead of laying siege to Maestricht, which would have given the Dutch sufficient employment, they invested Philipsbourg, which united the whole empire against France. *Dec. 3.]* War was now declared against the united provinces: if Holland had been attacked sooner, it is probable that William would have failed in his enterprise. The

made infamous like his grandfather, by the papers of his corrupter, which will be published without any precaution; when these *negotiations* appeared in Holland, the magistrates ordered a mutilated edition of it to be published, and the court of the Hague, a faithful translation in Dutch, to let the people know what their deputies have ever been.

The count de Lauzun, who, to make his way again to Versailles, had engaged in the affairs of king James, took upon himself the care of conducting to France that prince and his queen, to whom William had sent orders to quit England. From Calais the count de Lauzun wrote to the king, that James had commanded him to deliver his queen into no other hands but his; and that he thought himself very unfortunate in not being allowed to appear before his majesty. Lewis permitted him to return to court, and intreated the princess de Montpensier to approve of this reward for his assistance to the distressed queen.

The queen of England's arrival put all Versailles into motion; the court was as seriously employed in settling the ceremonial, as the council, in taking measures for restoring her husband to his crown.

Madame de Maintenon did not disdain to enter into these little affairs; the jealousy of rank, to which every thing is sacrificed, had no place in her mind. The queen of England saluted her, and gave her the stool; but half of this honour was allowed to dutchesses. When madame de Maintenon went to visit her, the queen, who was not ready, made her wait a moment, made a thousand apologies for it, and received her in her closet, where no other person was admitted.

A few days afterwards king James arrived: Lewis, whose protection he had despised some months before, received him, as he would have done the most fortunate prince in the world. The devotees were rejoiced to see a confessor as king: the jesuits, transported that this confessor was of their order, flattered themselves that by becoming necessary to him, they would be so to Lewis also.

The courtiers saw nothing in James the second but an ungraceful man, who wore his sword awkwardly, and buried his head in a hat of an enormous size, who, instead of reflecting upon his misfortunes, went to thank mother Agnes, a carmelite, for having been the first who endeavoured to bring him back to a religion, to which he owed them all. Those who remembered to have seen him a libertine in his youth, were not surprised

surprised at his attachment to this kind of religion. The nation was not interested in the unhappy fate of a prince, who seemed insensible of it himself; and whose precipitate flight left vacant a throne, under the ruins of which he ought to have buried himself.

The politicians were divided in their sentiments concerning this flight, which the brave loudly condemned. Some said, that it was prudent not to trust himself in the hands of a nation, always fierce and brutal, then mad with rage; that the regicide of Charles the first was too dreadful a warning to James the second, who was more criminal than he had been; and that William was not more just or more merciful than Cromwell.

Others said, that the prince of Orange would have obliged his father-in-law to redress the grievances of the oppressed people, to renounce the alliance with France, and perhaps to quit a religion, which in his hands, was an instrument of tyranny: It might have cost some ministers and some missionaries their heads; but the constitution of England, formed of three powers, would have armed itself against the abettors of tyranny, and shielded the person of the tyrant. The horror they felt for a parricide committed upon the father, would have secured the life of the son. The prince of Orange, after having restored liberty to the people, and fixed just bounds to the royal authority, would have repassed the sea with the glorious title of *the protector of nations*.

These conjectures were justified by the consequences of the revolution, by the snares that William laid for James, to induce him to fly; by the compassion of the people for their fugitive master, and by the great indifference with which the states of the kingdom, under the name of a convention, proceeded to the election of the prince of Orange.

However that may be, Lewis, whose vanity was soothed, by having a king among his courtiers, and who was jealous of the glory of restoring him to his throne, was the only one who seemed to be sensible of his misfortunes. He gave him a magnificent reception;

ception; he treated him with the utmost tenderness, and often said, 'I will have more honours shewn him, than if he still reigned.' It was reported that an English nobleman, who attended the king in his flight wrote to one of his friends at London: *dixit dominus domino meo: sede à dextris meis, donec ponam inimicos tuos scabellum pedum tuorum.*

The king was confirmed in these generous sentiments by madame de Maintenon, who contracted a strict friendship with the queen of England; that princess had, like her, a great deal of wit, but more zeal than piety, and more artifice than prudence; she reigned with great haughtiness in England; to madame de Maintenon she behaved with the deepest humility. The marchioness de Sevigné describes her with black eyes, which were not the less beautiful for having wept, finely shaped, her complexion extremely fair, her mouth ornamented with the finest teeth in the world, lean, pale, but great sensibility in her countenance, in her manners great dignity and politeness. Lewis the fourteenth, shewing great fondness to the prince of Wales, the queen said to him, 'I have envied the destiny of my son, who is not sensible of his misfortunes; but now I pity him, because he does not know your goodness.'

James implored the assistance of the emperor and the pope: the first answered him, that he pitied his misfortunes, but that he had occasion for his troops against France; and the second, that if he had followed his advice, he would not have been reduced to such humble intreaties. The king of Spain refused to hear his minister. All the sovereigns of Europe beheld with indifference a fall, which ought to have excited their resentment, or awakened their apprehensions. The civilians proposed this question: *Has a nation a right to rebel against that authority which would force it to receive a new faith?*

1689.] The king enabled James II. to make a descent into Ireland. Louvois, who sought to engross all power to himself, demanded the direction of this expedition;

expedition; Seignelay refused to yield it to him, and claimed it in right of his office, as secretary of state for the affairs of the marine. Madame de Maintenon favoured Seignelay's pretensions; not that she had any friendship for him, but she was intimately connected with his sisters, the dutchess de Chevreuse and de Beauvilliers. She headed the party against Louvois, caused the direction of the affairs of Ireland to be taken from him, and given to Seignelay, and received the queen of England's thanks for what she had done.

However the expedition went on more slowly for this contest. Louvois, who had been blamed for not having given credit to the report of the designed invasion of England by the prince of Orange, which every one knew, was resolved, that since he had neglected to prevent this misfortune, Seignelay should not have the honour of repairing his fault; seconded but weakly those designs, in which he ought to have concurred, and so made it impossible for the enterprize to succeed.

While king James was fighting in Ireland, or made a resemblance to fight, his wife remained at Saint Germain, plunged in the deepest affliction. The advices she received from the siege of Londonderry were not likely to dry up her tears: every instance of respect was shewn to her, all her desires were prevented; magnificent entertainments were formed for her, but she could be no where happy without a crown.

Lewis, the most polite, the most generous of kings, endeavoured to soften her affliction by every thing which he thought could be most agreeable to her: he suppressed the humiliating reflection of what she was become; not by recalling to her remembrance, with officious respect, what she had been; but by an uniform delicacy of behaviour, persuading her that she was all she had formerly been: every day some new present informed her, that she was not forgot; and because she was no less pious than unhappy, these presents had always some rela-

tion to devotion. At Marly, at Trianon, he consoled with her, or endeavoured to prevail upon her to be chearful with him : in a word, his behaviour shewed so much tender attention to the afflicted princess, that it was believed he had entertained a passion for her.

At Paris, it was confidently reported, that this connexion gave madame de Maintenon great uneasiness, and certainly not without good reason, says madame de la Fayette : for a mistress will always have more influence than a friend. Those who were better acquainted with the court, perceived to what principle the king's excessive complaisance was owing : novelty greatly contributed to it : compassion, that it might appear more generous, borrowed the air of sentiments less humiliating, and the benefactor seemed to be only a friend. It was to madame de Maintenon that the queen owed the obliging assiduities of Lewis : that princess was more apprehensive of tiring the king by her importunities, than of inspiring madame de Maintenon with the jealousy of a rival. These two ladies were almost always together ; they were not ignorant of the idle talk of the court, and smiled at the designs and mutual distrust, which were attributed to them.

James the second had enemies at Versailles, although he had no friends there ; by some malicious incendiary, Lewis was told that this prince appeared dissatisfied with him ; that he had complained, that the court insulted his distress, and that he seemed insensible to all that was doing to restore him to his crown.

Lewis, too credulous, was cooled with this report : his kindness to the queen ceased on a sudden ; she was excluded from the diversions at court, she was received with coldness, but little attention was shewn to her grief ; and what was worse than all, the succours for Ireland went on but slowly. The public, constant to its ignorant malignity, imputed this change to madame de Maintenon : the queen discovered the cause of it, in the unfavourable impressions which the king had

had been given against her husband. Overwhelmed with grief, she went to weep and complain to her only friend. Madame de Maintenon comforted her, and promised to undeceive the king. 'That is not sufficient, said the queen to her, my husband has been represented as ungrateful, he who is the most grateful of men; they have charged him with being haughty, he who is the humblest, as well as the most humbled of princes. I expect from his majesty's justice, that he will not be satisfied with declaring to you and to me, that he does not believe the slander; but that he will take measures to discover the author of it, that the reparation may be as public as the calumny. My husband is absent; it belongs to the king to revenge him, and not to permit him to be injured with impunity. You have always been the best of my friends; but on this occasion you will be the only one. Shew, madam, that you were in the right, when you declared, that it was not possible for a king of England to be ungrateful.

Madame de Maintenon prevailed upon the king to examine into the affair: the incendiary was named, and obliged to retract what he had said. The queen appeared again at Versailles; but James drew no advantage from the succours of his ally; he raised the siege of Londonderry, and returned to Saint Germain, from whence he attacked by conspiracies an enemy so well guarded, that it was easier to subdue than to assassinate him. Lewis settled a pension of six hundred thousand livres upon king James; the low states of the finances sometimes retarded the payments. Madame de Maintenon used to solicit the king for them: and the queen in a letter she once wrote to her upon that occasion, says; 'I thank you, madam; for the alms (for we ought to call things by their names) that you have obtained of the king for us.'

Their friendship continued unalterable in spite of reasons of state, difference of condition and inclinations, and of reports which tended either to destroy or lessen their confidence in each other. The queen was con-

tinually soliciting, and madame de Maintenon always obtaining. When the misfortunes into which France was plunged, deprived this princess of all hope, and reduced her to be nothing more than a recluse in the monastery of Chaillot; she often suffered refusals, she seldom obtained an audience of the king, but she supported with fortitude this new stroke of fortune, and appeared worthy to reign, ever since she had ceased to be a queen. Her magnanimity was not lessened by her gratitude, nor her gratitude by those just and mortifying reflections upon the insolence of benefactors: reflections which slightly glance upon a generous heart, but which make deep impressions upon an ungrateful one.

Time did not abate the compassion of madame de Maintenon for the misfortunes for her friend; they were always new, and always present to her mind. When these two ladies were seen together, one fallen from a rank to which the other durst not aspire, emulously struggling to assume a behaviour suitable to their condition; one concealing her greatness, the other endeavouring to make hers be forgot, both abasing themselves by a refinement of pride, each exalting the other by deference and respect, one still astonished at her elevation, the other at her fall: Madame de Maintenon refusing the pleasing distinctions of esteem, and the queen rejecting the homage of respect. Well might marshal Villeroy say, 'Are they ashamed that they are the wives of kings?'

CHAPTER XLV.

Father de la Chaize in disgrace, and restored again to favour.

FATHER de la Chaize was as solicitous to strengthen himself with the interest of madame de Maintenon; as were the queen of England and the marquis de Louvois. The king now entered into an age when confessors may pretend to make revolutions.

Father

Father de la Chaise had made himself master of the affairs of the church, which by the disputes that often arose between the court of France and the court of Rome, were become affairs of state.

Father de la Chaise found himself a minister of state without having perceived or expected it. He did business regularly with the king, and immediately saw all the lords and all the prelates at his feet. The Jansenists murmured greatly at the audiences given on saturdays; they sung psalms, they fasted, they prayed, that the government of the church might be taken from its enemy, who however was only theirs.

Father de la Chaise gave very honest but ill-timed counsels; the king followed them, and afterwards repented that he had done so. Provoked at the ill success of the affair, concerning the electorate of Cologne, he shewed his displeasure at it to the jesuit, by whose advice he had been guilty of two very considerable faults; one was by amusing himself in supporting with too much heat the right of exemption, and losing on that account the opportunity of getting an elector who would have been devoted to him; and the other was by insisting unseasonably upon the cardinal de Furstemberg's being elected bishop of Liege, and refusing to consent to the election of cardinal de Bouillon, whom the chapter had earnestly recommended.

The king reminded father de la Chaise of these faults; the confessor laid the blame upon the marquis de Louvois. The king in great rage told him, that an enterprise suggested by jesuits, had never succeeded, and that it would be better if they confined themselves to teaching their scholars, and not presume to meddle in state affairs. Lewis so seldom suffered himself to be transported with anger; he was so little accustomed to reproach his ministers with unsuccessful councils, which he thought was a tacit acknowledgment of his own readiness to be guided by others, that the confessor believed himself absolutely undone. It was past a doubt, when he found that his master always saw him with angry looks for the space of a month,

and he continued to do business with him, like a man who was uncertain whether he should be permitted to do it long.

Fear is a necessary curb to the power of favourites; father de la Chaife never made a better use of his, than at this very critical time; the distribution of benefices was never more equitable, and the distributor was never less haughty.

However the society alarmed at his danger, deliberated already concerning the choice of persons to be presented to the king to succeed him. Father de la Chaife, in whose heart all the apprehensions of his order were collected, ran to the apartment of madame de Maintenon, represented to her all that he had done, all that he had designed to do, complained that such long and faithful services should be so ill-rewarded, and that he should be made answerable for events which depended only upon fortune.

Madame de Maintenon, in great surprize, interrupted him, and desired to know what this discourse tended to: 'To prevail upon you, resumed the confessor, to lay the storm with which I am threatened, and to appease the king.' Banish your fears, replied madame de Maintenon, he is not angry; and yesterday he complained that you avoid him; go to him, he has forgot all, and is now only apprehensive that you have a better memory than himself.

The bishopric of Cahors, which was given to the abbé de la Luferne, sealed the reconciliation between the king and his confessor. 'Sire, said father de la Chaife to the king, I never durst mention the abbé de la Luferne to you, after his brother had married my niece.'

His power was now increased, and no longer had any bounds, but what the vigilance of a prince incessantly occupied with affairs was capable of putting to it. His enemies said that this power was unlimited, and asked if the kingdom was to be governed by jesuits. And why not be governed by them? heretic or orthodox, weak or of great abilities, secretary of
state,

state, or valet-de-chambre, whoever has the means of reigning, acquires a right to it, and favour belongs to those who have had the art of procuring it.

CHAPTER XLVI.

The Dauphiness.

THE dauphiness had lost her favour with the king and Jane her buffoon had predicted it to her, perceiving that the princess preferred the conversation of Bessola her foster-sister, to the most splendid entertainments of the court. She said to her, 'Madam, the king will be tired at length of this conduct, and if he abandons you, Jane will have more consequence than you.'

The king made an offer to the dauphiness of marrying Bessola to a man of quality: the dauphiness replied, 'She will love her husband, perhaps she may love him as much as she does me, and certainly she will not love him less, and then I should die with jealousy!' The king protested that there should be no more Bessola's in France, and afterwards the dutchess of Burgundy, was not allowed to keep mademoiselle de Marquet longer than six months.

Hunting, billiards, and Saint-Cyr were by turns the innocent amusements of the king. Once in fifteen days he used to go to Marly, and there he was always free, always kind and obliging. The dauphiness was never of these parties: the prince of Orange was forgot. The embarrassing pomp of royalty was laid aside without suspending its duties: business had nothing to apprehend from amusement. However the balls at court were melancholy enough, and lasted only two hours: the dauphiness never appeared at them, she could not be prevailed upon to give one moment to complaisance or pleasure. The princess of Conti did not venture to stay too long, lest her malicious eyes should betray her, and madame de Main-

tenon chide her, for it was her whom the king always employed to denounce his anger to any of the royal family that had offended him : madame de Maintenon used to soften the severity of Lewis ; their minds would have been alienated from each other, but Madame de Maintenon always gentle, always conciliating, reunited them : the king's anger would have occasioned great terrors and uneasiness ; she removed their apprehensions, and softened their grief.

It is certain that she exposed herself to the hatred of the princes, who, weary of her repeated admonitions, might, instead of a solid and resolute friend, have considered her only as a troublesome spy upon their conduct : but she rather chose to hazard their displeasure, than to see them upon ill terms with the king. She gave offence to some of them, but she served them all faithfully. They murmured against her at first, but soon began to find they had been obliged, and gratitude took the place of resentment and distrust. They consulted her in all their affairs, thro' her they solicited the king, they submitted their differences to her arbitration. An ordinary favourite would have been vain of such unlimited confidence, and have taken no care to merit it, she was fatigued by it, yet entered with ardour into their concerns : ' I am just ' come, said she one day, from being drawn by four ' princes, which is worse than being drawn by four ' horses.'

Their fears of her being declared queen, were destroyed by their admiration of her virtues, and she increased her power by the solicitude she shewed to repress it. If her marriage had been made publick, the king who had been charmed by her disinterestedness, would have been disgusted by her ambition : the princes loved her sincerely, yet they had all been either her open or her secret enemies : if she had been declared queen, she would indeed have had more exteriour honours paid her, but she would have lost that confidence, and that veneration so soothing to self-love, because it was paid to her

her merit alone : it is probable also, that if Lewis had been obliged to treat her as something more than a friend, he would have treated her as he had done his wife. Thus, whether we suppose her ambitious or vain, or believe her humble and moderate, the little affectations of royalty which have been attributed to her, are equally destroyed.

The king's three daughters, who were generally called the *princesses*, had frequent differences with each other. Their father intreated them to live together as sisters should : ' If you continue your quarrels, said he to them, you have palaces of your own where it is fitter you should reside than at court.

Madame de Maintenon restored peace among them, every thing now wore a new face ; they visited each other frequently ; they shewed themselves in publick, and their behaviour to each other had now an appearance of unreserved friendship and esteem. Unfortunately this union so seldom found in private families, in that of princes scarce possible, was interrupted by the dauphin and dauphiness.

He was jealous of her affection for Bessola ; she of his passion for the countess du Roure, who however had yet only glances from him. The dauphin was offended at her repeated complaints ; she used to pass whole days in her closet inaccessible to every one ; she would affect to speak generally in the German language before her husband, who one day said to her : ' If you are dissatisfied with my conduct, madame, I expect that you should close your eyes, be silent, or complain only to God or to me.'

The king's affection for this princess was greatly abated, and although madame de Maintenon had often spared her some very severe reproaches, yet she had heard enough to convince her that she could never regain the king's esteem ; she had been accused of preferring the interest of the duke of Bavaria her brother, to that of her father-in-law and her husband ; she had not been able to conceal the satisfaction she felt at the misfortunes of cardinal de Furstemberg, who was

competitor with prince Clément, and she was suspected of having revealed to her family secrets of great consequence.

It is not very likely that the king gave absolute credit to these reports, but suspicions which are rejected through a fear of conviction, always leave indelible traces upon the mind : it appeared to him, that the dauphiness was at least guilty of having given room for calumny, by not plainly enough preferring the good of the country where she was to reign, to that where where she was born. Hence those perpetual uneasinesses, those disgusts, and that mutual distrust, the most cruel punishment imaginable to such persons as are obliged to live together and to shew respect to each other.

The king by the open preference he gave madame de Maintenon to her, added to her uneasiness by raising her jealousy : * she no longer beheld around her that croud which she had disdained ; she possessed no more that degree of favour with the king which makes persons of her rank interest themselves in the happiness of the state ; she had fled from the diversions of the court ; they now fled her in return : her health seemed impaired ; a deeper melancholy was imprest upon her countenance ; she shun'd society with more solicitude than ever, and lost that dignity of sentiment, that conscious sense of deserved superiority, so becoming a woman who stood next to the first throne in the world.

Overwhelmed with melancholy, she languished in a swift decay, and prepared herself for death, when a courier came to tell madame de Maintenon who was at Saint-Cyr, that the dauphiness whom she had left tolerably well in the morning, desired to see her, that she might have some private discourse with her, and die in her arms. Madame de Maintenon set out instantly from Saint Cyr ; she was shut up two hours with the princess : what passed between them was never known, probably the dauphiness expressed her regret for not having always loved her ; and cleared herself of some imputations

* Manuscript memoirs of the bishop of Agen.

imputations which had been the cause of her own unhappiness in losing the king's esteem for her. This secret conversation, this instance of confidence in those moments, when all dissimulation is at an end, is the highest eulogium that can be given to madame de Maintenon : her elevation raised her enemies, and she might be hated for a time, but such was the involuntary esteem her acknowledged virtue inspired, that this hatred ended in the tenderest affection for her.

The dauphiness expired, embracing the little duke of Berry, to whom she said, ' most tenderly do I love thee, tho' thou has cost me dear.' The king forcing the dauphin from the bed-side, said to him, ' such is the end of human greatness.'

The dauphiness was not lamented so much as decency required, neither by the court, her household, her husband, madame de Maintenon, the king, the poor, nor the devotees ; however she was kind and good in her domestick life, she loved the dauphin, she was charitable, she esteemed madame de Maintenon, and she was pious, but she had not a French heart ; she had not French manners, and all her good qualities were overlooked.

The king, to dissipate what was called his grief, made a great hunting match ; this diversion did not employ, tho' it unbent his mind, which is a little extraordinary in a station where it is so natural to be oppressed with languor, and to seek to shun one's self.

When he returned to Versailles, all the great officers and ladies of the deceased dauphiness's household came to kiss his hand ; madame de Maintenon who as dame d'Autour should have performed this ceremony, instead of making compliments of condolence received them. She was the only person of that princess's household who did not appear at the solemn funeral service performed at Saint-Denis and at *Notre-Dame*, and her absence on this occasion instructed the curious in all they wished to be certain of.

Ever after, she seemed to consider herself only as a private person when out of the castle of Versailles, within it she had the highest honours, notwithstanding
her

her extreme solicitude to avoid them. She would not use the mourning hangings of the court; 'I am not a dutchess' said she. The first marshal de Noailles representing to her, that she had a right to it as having been once dame d'Autour, she shewed some surprise in her countenance at his founding that right upon her having been a domestick of the dauphiness, and answered only by a smile, which seemed to say, that the dignity of her station placed her above that subordinate grandeur, while her humility rejected all.

CHAPTER XLVII.

The campaign of Mons.

THE league of Augsbourg had armed all Europe against Lewis XIVth. The prince of Orange repassed the Sea, and the confederate princes of Germany composed his court in Holland, whither he now came to console himself for the aversion of a people who hated him, as soon as they had crowned him.

The success of his enterprize had not made him happy, and the only gratification of that ambition to which he had sacrificed every thing, was the momentary joy of a man who goes to bed with a revenue of five hundred thousand livres and rises a king.* He fled from the caprice, and perhaps the troublesome remorse of his wife, the most lovely and the most miserable princess in the world. The dauphin to whom she had been proposed had no reason to envy him.

Our

* The marquis de Dangeau relates in his journal, that the prince of Orange, when he was leaving Holland, said these words to the states: 'Gentlemen, farewell for ever. I go, resolved to perish or to reign. If I perish; I shall die your servant: If I reign, I shall live your friend.' This circumstance is neither true nor probable.

Our arms had been successful, his had been decisive. The battle of the Boyne had decided the contest between James the II. and him: it is true, this battle had cost him marshal Schomberg, but Lewis had just lost a minister who only was capable of re-establishing the affairs of Ireland. Seignelay died, and with him died our marine; he was succeeded by Pontchartrain, whose peculiar destiny was to succeed every one without repairing the loss of any.

The king resolved to head his army, and once more spread in person that terror of his arms which had begun to lose its force. Madame de Maintenon was too jealous of his glory to oppose this design: a lawful passion never enervates the mind.

Lewis assembled his council, and without any other preliminary declared that he would make the campaign of Flanders. 'That I may triumph, said he, over those enemies who envy my glory, and maintain the purity of that religion, which by the extirpation of heresy I have established throughout my dominions, it is my intention notwithstanding the rigour of the season to go and lay siege to Mons, the principal bulwark of the league, and take it before the eyes of this pretended distributor of provinces.'

This resolution astonished the ministers, and made the whole kingdom tremble, such real terrors did this William inspire, whose supposed death had the year before been celebrated by rejoicings which Lewis alone disapproved.

Madame de Maintenon did not attend the king to Flanders, yet was not disturbed with any apprehensions of losing her influence. Some days before the king's departure, she retired to Saint-Cyr. Lewis came there to take leave of her, and they were two hours alone together. After imploring peace of God at the feet of the altars, he desired to see the community assembled: 'Adieu, ladies, said he to them; I recommend myself to your prayers, I have a great need of them: to be a king is to fill a post, which exposes us to many sins.' Tears were in his eyes as

he

he spoke these words, which made the whole community weep: 'I hope, added he, that God will hear the prayers you offer for me:' after having said a few words to madame de Maintenon, he again addressed the community, and shewing her to them: 'Adieu! ladies, said he, to your care I leave what I most value in the world.'

Madame de Loubert the superiour replied, that the whole community would redouble their prayers that God would be pleased to make him victorious: 'Pray rather for peace than for victory, said the king, we must endeavour to make our enemies demand this wished for peace of us.'

During his absence Saint-Cyr was almost incessantly employed in imploring of heaven the preservation of the king and the blessings of peace. Madame de Maintenon received every day an account of the progress of the siege from Couriers dispatched by the king for that purpose: she communicated these advices to the king of England who often spent whole days with her at Saint-Cyr, and there endeavoured to console himself for the bad success of the brave Odonel in Ireland. It was matter of wonder to the publick to see a dethroned prince shutting himself up in convents, while Lewis was braving all the rigors of the season, and all the dangers of war to restore him to his crown.

The siege of Mons was conducted with great skill: Boufflers invested the place, the king attacked it in person, Luxembourg and Fenillade commanded under him, and all the princes were present at the action: Vauban had the direction of the works. The prince of Orange gave the besiegers some uneasiness by drawing near Notre-Dame de Hall, and the French guards having

* It will be easily imagined that these words were committed to paper upon the spot. I have them as well as many other particulars from a lady who was educated at Saint-Cyr.

ving attacked a horn-work were seized with a panick and fled : their officers endeavoured to stop them by presenting their drawn swords to their breasts, but all was ineffectual. The grenadiers and musqueteers attacked this work, and carried it in three quarters of an hour, then it was that the guards had the name of *Pierrots* given them, which it is said they have not yet deserved to lose.

The king dined with a good appetite within sight of the lines : he walked round the town, and continued a long time within musket-shot. A centinel having stopped him, some body asked him if he did not know the king : ' yes, replied the centinel, I know the king, ' but this is not his place.'

A moment afterwards, the horse of de la Chenaye, was killed by a cannon-ball very near the king and at the side of the count de Toulouse, who giving orders that la Chenaye should be remounted, said, ' and ' is a cannon ball nothing more than this ?'

One of the enemies officers who had been taken in a sally made by the besieged, being interrogated by the king, assured him that the place could not be taken without a battle, the king replied ; ' So much ' the better, it is for that purpose, that we are ' here.

Notwithstanding the various employments given him by this siege, he held his councils with great exactness, and at once fought his enemies, and directed the affairs of his provinces : he visited the hospital of the army twice, was present while the wounded were dressed, and comforted the dying : the surgeons never performed their duty better.

Mons surrendered after the trenches had been opened before it fifteen days. The prince of Bergue had defended it valiantly, and Lewis was in every one of the attacks : madame de Maintenon went with the princesses to meet him at Compiègne, and after the first compliments, said to him, ' Sire, we intreat you, ' as David's generals did him, to go out no more with ' us to war, lest the light of Israel should be extinguished.'

The

The king went to Saint-Cyr to return thanks to God for the victory he had given him, and for the life which his providence had preserved: madame de Maintenon obligingly reproached him with having given terrors to the whole world, by exposing himself too much: the king replied: 'I have only done my duty.' But said madame de Loubert, 'the happiness of the state depends upon the safety of your sacred person.' Places like mine, resumed the king, can never be void, another will fill it better than I have done, I probably have abilities for war, because I am experienced in it, another prince may excel me in better things.'

C H A P T E R XLVIII.

The Academy. The marshal de la Feuillade.

TH E S E sentiments were not dissembled, Lewis had all the simplicity and candour of great minds. He began to reflect with shame upon that haughtiness and ostentation of grandeur, which had distinguished the first years of his reign, and raised him so many enemies. He refused the harangues of the sovereign courts upon the campaign of Mons. The academy, which was then as ready to applaud humility, as it had been before to nourish pride, gave the king's modesty for a subject. Madame de Maintenon had no esteem for this literary society, whose compliments, flatteries, and even its works, seemed calculated to keep up mean envy, to cramp the language, and to propagate bad taste: 'Are you not ashamed, said she, to Fenelon one day to be among men who argue only upon words?'

Madame de Maintenon, notwithstanding her aversion to this body, always protected it in some of its members, yet she never pretended to any power in the elections: it fell into a lethargy which would have held it yet, if La-Motte, the three times rejected Fontenelle, and some other illustrious wits had not re-animated it. The intrigues of the court, into which
it

it was introduced by the cabals of some men of letters, preserved it from languishing. The votes were never more free nor less just than in the first years of Lewis XIV. If places in the academy were to be had by interest, they would be always well filled, provided they were sought with emulation, which they will always be, while a superiour genius possesses one. Wise men still look upon this society as a set of triflers and parasites, while wiser than they consider it as an assembly of extraordinary men: hence proceeds that eager solicitude among the members of the academy, of things to be received into the academy of words, and hence the difference between the emulation which these two societies inspire, as between the souls of Bignon and Richelieu their legislators.

Those who pretended to know the king well, thought this contempt for praise insincere: they even insinuated that he loved praise so inordinately, that he envied any share of it to another. Tournell, who had been elected by the French academy, introduced into his discourse, in praise of the king, a compliment to Pontchartrain whose clerk he was. The minister commanded him to suppress this compliment: the academician, who did not think this humility sincere, made a very flattering eulogium on him. When he returned to the hôtel de Pontchartrain, expecting to receive the thanks of the minister, the Swiss refused him entrance. Pontchartrain shewed great attention to discover the authors of those epigrams, which were wrote against him: there were some equally cruel wrote upon the king, why did he not punish the authors of them likewise?

Lewis was so sincerely disgusted with adulation, that madame de Maintenon often said; 'He is thought to be vain and haughty, yet there is no one that has less of those faults than him.' Who better knew his virtues than her who had given them to him. He used to acknowledge with the candor of a man superiour to his errors, such as he had committed through the immense variety of the affairs in which he was employed, and the indispensible duties of his station. He despised

despised the theses of the Minimes at Marseillès, as soon as he knew the signification of those words consecrated by the Holy Ghost to the king of Heaven and earth, *dico ego opera mea regi.*

He was extremely offended at the impious inscription made by Menestrier the jesuit, and engraved upon the frize and upon the four faces of the temple of honour dedicated to him by the city of Paris.* He desired the states of Languedoc to apply those sums to the relief of the province which they had destined for an equestrian statue of him. To those who merit statues it is easy to refuse them, yet it is glorious also. He did not shew much satisfaction at that which was erected to him in *la place des victoires*, the inscription of which *viro immortalis*, was criticised by foreigners as being idolatrous, although it was only energetick: *Viro* and no more would have seemed to say less, and would have said more.

The marshal de la Feuillade saw his favour decreasing, in proportion as the king's love for the true glory augmented. In the agreeable part of conversation Feuillade excelled all men: he first was informed of every thing that was new, fruitful in amusements of every kind, imitating at a vast expence the pomp of the great lords whom he had seen. He was a model for courtiers, as Lewis was for heroes, but when Lewis became wise, or had a tendency to become so, Feuillade knew not how to conform to this change, and therefore ceased to please him. The king was devout, and

* *Regi Ludovico magno P. P. votis publicis
Devota numini majestatique ejus
Civitas Parisiensis pia, fidelis, obsequens
Memoris observantiæ templum. D. D. C.*

‘ The City of Paris, pious, faithful, obedient, devoted by publick vows to the divinity and majesty of king Lewis the great, the father of the country, hath consecrated this temple as a monument of its veneration and gratitude.

and Feuillade made a jest of devotion, he loved play, yet despised *ressource* which the king had invented, and brought from Saint-Cyr to Marly. He would not play at *Portiques*, although the king was extremely fond of it, because there was no other art than to cross or pile : Lewis did not like witticisms and repartees ; and Feuillade would always be witty. He became odious to the ministers, dreaded by his friends, and perceived that the favour of the prince is soon lost, when a man is hated by every one else. He died suddenly, and had only time to utter these words, ' My God, have mercy upon me, why have I not done for thee the thousandth part of what I have done for the king.'

Feuillade was interred at Saint-Eustache, where he had not even a tomb : when Lewis was informed of his death, the courtiers thought they perceived some signs of joy on his countenance, and the boldest of them trembled.

CHAPTER XLIX.

The death of the Marquis de Louvois.

THE fall of Louvois was owing to the same cause as the disgrace of Feuillade. The king now hated that false glory in pursuit of which he had gained so many victories, committed so many errors, and suffered such various misfortunes. All the schemes of a minister end in maintaining himself in a post which he fills only by commission, and which the publick always supposes will be better filled by any other. Louvois who found himself almost useless in peace, had kindled this war, for which the king reproached him so much the more, as he was sensible he had taken too great advantage of his inclination for it.

No one of the other ministers had dared to oppose him ; he had subjected them all by the force of his genius, and by the unexpected success of his boldest enterprises. Seignelay had been reduced to employ the mediation of women, in affairs that related to the good of the state. Croissy understood nothing but the arts of negotiation,

negotiation, and yet had not that spirit of foresight and caution which conducts every thing with deliberation. Pomponne whose mind was filled with his former disgrace, was continually employed in preventing a second. Chateauneuf was obliged to content himself with the laborious office of a clerk. Pontchartrain filled his post of superintendant of the finances, as if he had been afraid that he should lose it, and conducted the affairs of the marine, as if he despaired of retrieving them. Boucherat was wholly employed in the chicanery of the law. Rose and the president la Chaise were not capable of taking advantage of circumstances to enforce the resolutions of the cabinet. Pelletier deplored the misfortunes of his country, Beauvilliers had only virtues. Louvois had engrossed all the power to himself, and France had but one minister, although she had not a prime minister.

The king wished but could not resolve to shake off the yoke: Louvois treated him with a haughtiness, which kings may sometimes dissemble, but never pardon. He was now hated by Lewis, yet he did not cease to be useful to him, and such was his influence that at the eve of a disgrace, a long time projected, and always deferred, he obtained the superintendence of the post-offices, a place of immense profit.

The coldness of the king towards him, the reserved behaviour of madame de Maintenon, the publick hatred, some verses in Esther applied to him, all warned him, (if such warning can ever be heard) that it was time for him to forsake the court.

After the siege of Mons he suffered so many mortifications, that he saw plainly, his ruin was resolved upon. He was accused of having neglected the advices sent him by Monsieur d'Avaux, who had discovered the design of the prince of Orange to invade England, which might have been so easily prevented. They reproached him with the cruelties exercised in the Palatinate, the bombardment of Liege upon a very slight pretence, the loss of Mayence which had been but ill provided for a siege. He was accused of having sent private orders to Bulonde to raise the siege of Coni; of having

having protracted that of Mons, and of giving the prince of Orange time to attempt throwing in succours to the besieged. He was blamed for the loss of the battle of Valcourt, in which marshal d'Humieres commanded; and for not having used proper endeavours to retain the king of Sweden in the interest of France, which he had forsaken and joined the league of Ausbourg.

All his services were forgot, his errors only were remembered, and the errors of others were also attributed to him: so easy it is to make the greatest minister for military affairs, appear weak and criminal: But all these accusations were trifles, compared with the guilt he incurred by the purport of two papers with writing on the margin in his own hand. They were given to madame de Maintenon by d'Augicour, a gentleman in the service of Louvois, who betrayed his master. Madame de Maintenon's regard for Lewis would not permit her to suppress these papers. One of them contained a scheme for treating the duke of Savoy so ill, as to oblige him at length to declare against France. The other was to force the Swifs to break their alliance with us, by failing in every article of the capitulations made with them.

This fact would be scarce credible, if we did not know to what extremities a minister will proceed, whose power and influence are declining, who is always ready to preserve by crimes and treachery, a station where his virtues or his abilities have placed him, but in which his services are not able to maintain him. This discovery threw Lewis into the utmost astonishment: he found he had a minister, whose whole attention was employed in raising him enemies, and who sported with the fortunes and the lives of his subjects: what more could a traitor have done?

He would have had him instantly arrested, but he had still occasion for his councils, and he was likewise sure that the victim could not escape him; he therefore continued to do business with Louvois, but was not able to suppress his resentment, though he concealed the motives of it. It has been said by some persons of the court, who lived in those times, that one day the
king

king speaking to him with great harshness, the minister threw some papers on the table, near the king, saying, 'There is no serving you.' The king rose, and snatching up the tongs, would have struck his insolent minister, if he had not been withheld by madame de Maintenon, whose presence Louvois did not think would have been so useful to him, after having been so disagreeable.

This sudden transport of rage destroyed in one instant the health of Louvois, the fruits of thirty years service and of twelve years of favour: hope alone remained, he knew that the king had an aversion for violent measures, and after having lived twenty five years with him, he knew him so little as to be apprehensive only of poison. He dissembled his grief, but it was too violent to suffer him to be always master of it. The courtiers perceived it, and the fierce and haughty Louvois was now become an object of compassion. A flatterer, still exaggerating his power to him, he replied: *One day in favour, the next in the Bastile.*

Incapable of submission, he offended his master again, and one day opposed him so rudely, that the king quitting his desk, went forwards to the chimney, and took up his cane: Louvois went out of his presence with serenity in his countenance, but despair in his heart. As soon as he arrived at his own house, he cried out, *I am ruined*, and discharged his irage upon some unhappy persons, to whom he sent letters de Cachet, while he dreaded his own.

'It is done, said he to a friend, my catastrophe is approaching, my ruin is decreed, and all that now remains, is to determine the manner of it. His friend told him that his fears were ill grounded, that during twenty years he had heard him say the same thing, but that his experience of the past, should make him less apprehensive of the future. 'That is true, replied Louvois, but formerly if the king was displeased with me, it seemed to be the fault of his humour only, and he would immediately afterwards assume an obliging air, but now he treats me with the utmost contempt, and every day brings with it a new and more cruel affront. I know him, I have observ-
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‘ed him; he takes pleasure in using me ill, and he has used me too ill, to make it possible for me to forgive him.’

[*July 16, 1692.*] Tortured with his own reflections, fluctuating between the desire of finishing his career nobly, and his fears of making a base retreat, divided between the love of glory and the love of liberty, he resolved to resign all his employments. Madame de Maintenon wrote to him, that he might return to council, and do business as usual, advised him to shew no resentment, and assured him that the storm was over.

This letter restored him to life, he forgot his resolution which alone could have saved him: he saw the king again, and saw that he had irrecoverably lost his favour. When the council broke up, he went home, retired to his own apartment, and drank a glass of water: exhausted with grief, terror and anxiety, he threw himself into a great chair, uttered some inarticulate words, and expired.

The suddenness of his death persuaded the public that it could not be natural, as if an oppression of the heart, occasioned by disappointment and chagrin, was not the natural death of an ambitious man. The king when he heard of it, expressed great satisfaction. ‘This year, said he, has delivered me from three men whom it was no longer possible to bear with, Seignelay, la Feuillade and Louvois.’

The public was more confirmed in their notions of his being poisoned: it is necessary that princes, however averse they are to this crime, should remember that they are surrounded by persons who are always inclined to suspect them of it. The king gave Louvois’s employments to Barbezieux, whom that minister had hated, and endeavoured in vain to form him for the business of the state.

Lewis did not immediately feel that he had lost a great minister, because till the peace of Rесwick, the plan laid down by Louvois had been exactly followed: but Louvois had not concerted one for the war on account of the succession to the throne of Spain, and then it was first perceived that he was no more.

In

In none of those ministers which Lewis afterwards tried in military affairs, did he find that attention to the most trifling circumstances notwithstanding the greatness of his designs, that ready dispatch in the midst of innumerable affairs, that firmness in maintaining military discipline, that profound secrecy, which had given the suspicious William so many uneasy nights, those wise instructions so useful to generals, and which constrained none but Turenne, that knowledge of men which always directed him to the best choice, and when to employ them seasonably: in a word, in none of them could he find that son of Machiavel, that compound of a courtier, and a citizen, born, as it should seem, for the oppression and the glory of his country.

Louvois left immense riches to his family: no minister had ever been more nobly rewarded; he had purchased all the land about his own estate without laying any person under the least restraint, a very remarkable circumstance in a man of his rank and character.

CHAPTER L.

The marriages of the duke de Chartres, and of the duke du Maine.

THE affairs of the state did not hinder Lewis from attending to those of his family. To secure to the duke du Maine and the count de Toulouse the rank for which he designed them, he resolved to give mademoiselle de Blois their sister to the duke de Chartres his nephew. This design was a remainder of that pride with which he had been intoxicated. To what foreign prince could he have proposed such an alliance? yet he determined to propose it to the only son of his brother. To Lewis every thing appeared mean that was not distinguishingly great. And in his opinion he neither degraded the duke de Chartres, nor honoured mademoiselle de Blois by this match. In his eyes, the first prince of his blood was only the first of his subjects as long as he permitted him to be so, and he thought the fruits of a guilty passion might please persons

persons the most delicate in points of honour, if those fruits were his.

Lewis despised the national prejudices, the adulation of his courtiers had taught him to think, that he who was the master of the people's actions, ought to be so of their judgment, and every prince who is not born to reign over the hearts of his subjects expects at least to reign over their wills. He saw that the duke de Vendôme had neither in his court nor in his parliament, any distinction or authority that shewed him to be the grandson of a king, and he secretly blamed Henry the fourth for not having dared to despise that hated distinction between pure and mixed blood?

But since it was probable his family might have attentions to the glory of the Bourbons, which the chief of the Bourbons had not, he thought it necessary to obtain from love, that consent which authority could not force till it had suffered a refusal. It was with this design that mademoiselle de Blois was often exposed to the eyes of the prince.

This young lady had all the beauty of her mother, but there was a gentleness in her countenance that promised a disposition very different. The duke de Chartres was of that age, when whatever is loved, is loved with ardor. He soon conceived a violent passion for mademoiselle de Blois; he never saw her without wishing that she was not illegitimate, and perhaps without forgetting that she was so.

The sentiments he entertained he doubtless inspired. No man was ever more amiable, no woman ever had a form more capable of pleasing, a more beautiful complexion, or more regular features, and no man ever cultivated the graces of his person less. The prince had inspired the most insensible of the sex with love, yet he always attempted the easiest conquests. His first amours alarmed the king, who directed madame de Maintenon to shew him the indecency and madness of such a passion: this reprimand was given with so much gentleness and wisdom that the prince from that moment had the tenderest regard for ma-

dame de Maintenon, and returned to his studies which he had quitted for love.

These little irregularities gave the king an opportunity to pretend that he would look out for a wife for him, since he found he must have one, and afterwards to offer him his daughter, which the example of two other branches secured from a refusal.

The dutchess of Orleans, * who to the pride of blood and the extreme delicacy of her nation with regard to marriages, joined all the haughtiness of the sister-in-law of the greatest monarch in the world, and a declared contempt for madame de Montespan, who during her favour had not shewed any solicitude to gain her friendship, heard the first proposals with great disdain. The duke of Orleans, who had no will but hers, sometimes gave the king hopes that the match should be concluded, sometimes promised the dutchess that he would resolutely oppose it, and sometimes seemed, with madame de Maintenon, to be inclined to yield; he was in the irresolute state of mind of a courtier who is sensible that what is required of him is mean, but remembers that his master has many offences to pardon him.

The duke de Chartres was transported at the thoughts of being son to the king and possessor of her he loved: but his mother telling him that by this match he would dishonour her, his ancestors, himself, and his posterity, he ceased to love or feigned to do so. However an understanding superiour already to prejudices of every kind, raised him above those trifling considerations of illegitimacy; but that he might use them to his own advantage he seemed to be influenced by those considerations, with a view of restoring the dignity of grandson of France, if the marriage was concluded, and of acquiring by an honourable resistance, the favour of the people if it should not.

The

* Charlotte-Isabella, daughter of Charles-Lewis, elector palatine, married at Châlons, November 21, 1671. and died 1722.

The king and madame de Maintenon were extremely solicitous for the success of this affair, the king, because he had a great affection for mademoiselle de Blois, and madame de Maintenon, because she adored the duke du Maine, whose rank, which his father's tenderness and liberality had made so illustrious, would be rendered secure by this alliance. Both the king and she dissembled their concern at the bad success of their first endeavours in favour of this marriage, and at some severe expressions which had escaped the dutchess of Orleans, whose politeness was not one of her most distinguishing qualities. The abbé Dubois was employed by the king, and madame de Maintenon, to negotiate this affair; he was sub-preceptor to the prince, and was raised to this post with more difficulty than afterwards to that of first minister.

This abbé had already that ascendant over the mind of the prince, which a man, devoted to pleasures, must necessarily obtain over a youth who is beginning to love them; he had acquired the confidence of his pupil, by laughing with him at all those who reproved him for his faults. Madame de Maintenon could not easily resolve to trust the king's designs to a man of low birth, who had no religion, was the corrupter of his pupil, and so openly, that the duke of Orleans had forbid him to attend his son in his first campaign in Flanders. But as soon as she conversed with him, she found him so ready to comply with all that she proposed, so grave, so sincerely attached to the state, and so fruitful in expedients, that her aversion for him ceased; she apprehended no treachery from him, and she told the king that she would answer for the success of this affair.

The abbé subdued by degrees the duke de Chartres reluctance to this match, and advised him to conclude it, notwithstanding the opposition made by his parents. He represented to him, that his obstinacy would offend the king, who when he found he could not be his father-in-law, would become his persecutor: that he would remove him from affairs, exclude him from the diversions of the court, and deprive him of the com-

mand of the army: that when the duke of Orleans died, he would reduce him to the quality of first prince of the blood, and to those honours only which were inseparable from that rank; and during his life would always prevent his marrying.

The duke of Chartres yielded to the force of these arguments; he saw that by this marriage he should secure all his prerogatives, and this consideration determined him. In his heart he contemned those prejudices which had such weight with his parents, but it was with difficulty that he could bring himself to avow this contempt publickly. His ambition raised him above popular opinion, and in an affair which was to decide the happiness of his life, he thought and acted like a prince and a philosopher.

The abbé Dubois advised him to treat privately with the king, and suggested to him what conditions he should exact. The duke punctually followed his instructions, and the king extremely pleased at the ready compliance of his nephew, promised him the entire succession to all the rights of the duke of Orleans, his father. And these promises were faithfully performed.

When the dutchess of Orleans was informed of the step her son had taken, she threatened him severely, and forbid him to go any farther; others add, that she struck him, reproaching him at the same time with the infamy he drew upon himself, as if the chief of a family was not the best judge, of what either honoured or disgraced it.

The dukke of Orleans who seemed dissatisfied through policy was appeased by reason. *Feb. 19, 1692.* the marriage was celebrated with great magnificence at Versailles. The dutchess of Orleans appeared at all the entertainments that were made on this occasion with seeming satisfaction; in this illegitimated princess, the duke de Chartres found what he vainly sought in the greater part of princesses born in marriage, great wisdom, unaffected modesty, solid piety, conjugal fidelity, œconomy, the talents and the patience necessary for

for the education of her children, and a thousand qualities which the corruption of the age has exalted into eminent virtues.

Dubois was rewarded with a little abbey, and was transported with joy at his good fortune, he afterwards received a cardinal's hat with scorn; however, he did not obtain that small benefice without difficulty; father de la Chaize, who did not know the king's reasons for giving it him, represented to his majesty that Dubois was addicted to women, wine and play. 'That may be,' answered the king, 'but he has no engagement, he is never drunk, and he never loses.'

March 19.] The duke du Maine was almost as happy as the duke de Chartres, and without any degradation. The king was tired of foreign princesses, he therefore married him to mademoiselle de Charolois granddaughter to the great Condé. Whom at Sceaux we have seen patronizing the sciences and the arts, despised almost every where else, preserving till the last moment a taste for genius, and the respect and esteem of the publick, so much the more honourable to her as being paid to her merit, and not to her favour at court. Madame de Maintenon had assisted in her education, and often said, when she saw her launch into the pleasures of the age, with all the eager solicitude of youth. 'Must this also escape me!'

The duke du Maine, had then designs of ambition and sparks of genius; he had passed through all the military degrees, and served in Flanders with distinction. The publick said, he concealed a thousand striking qualities, under an air of modesty and indolence; the publick was mistaken, madame de Maintenon knew him better. 'He is too virtuous,' said she, 'ever to make much noise.'

The marchioness de Montespan, interested herself but very little, in these events; 'shall I go to court,' cried she, 'to act the fine part of the mother of the princes, or the dowager mistress.' However, she did appear there, and was received as if she had never been there before. She gave a bed worth forty thousand

and crowns, to the duke du Maine, her pearls to the dutchess of Bourbon, and her diamonds to the dutchess of Chartres. It was expected that the interview between her and madame de Maintenon, would have been extremely embarrassing to both, but they behaved at first, as if they had never known each other, and afterwards, as if they had always been friends.

Monsieur de * * * * flattered himself that he should have been able to reconcile her with her husband, who had, like her, turned devotee. Madame de Montespan readily consented, but the husband was inflexible, and monsieur de * * * * desisted from this scheme in which there was more piety, than good sense or honour. The marquis de Montespan occasioned a good jest, by leaving legacies to the duke du Maine, and the count de Toulouse, as to his lawful children; according to the axiom of law so often insisted upon.

CHAPTER LI.

The siege of Namur.

1692.] **T**HE new married princes soon quitted love for war and glory. Lewis being informed of the measures taken by the allies, judged it necessary to force them by some striking enterprise, either to make peace, or to hazard the loss of three kingdoms, which their chief had conquered. In the low countries, the allies had a hundred thousand men, but Lewis was persuaded, that his army, supported, and animated by his presence, would easily stop their progress.

While William waited for the season for opening the campaign, he affected to lead a life of great ease and indifference at Loo, a solitary country house conformable to his melancholy temper, and very convenient for carrying on his private correspondence. He used to hunt every day, and appeared to be as little moved with the great preparations France was making against him, as if he had the disposal of all events. By this seeming

seeming security he animated his allies with new hopes, deceived the elector of Bavaria, and defied Lewis.

The king of France resolving to open the campaign with some important conquest, laid siege to Namur, which had at all times been considered as the strongest bulwark of the united provinces, and for that very reason the most likely to raise the reputation of his arms.

Madame de Maintenon expressed an inclination to be with the king during this siege. The king readily consented to it. 'You will attend me, said he, if I should be seized with any illness, as for all other accidents, I am resigned to the will of providence, which, if my life be necessary to France, will, I doubt not, preserve it, and if it be useless, I am contented to lose it.'

He had often run to meet death with the noble ardour of a hero, the christian, resigned to the decrees of God, did not even deign to brave it. Madame de Maintenon was charmed with these pious sentiments; she saw with conscious satisfaction the progress of her work, and her tenderness was increased by it. Whatever she esteemed, she loved; Lewis therefore was the most amiable of men, because he was the most worthy.

In the beginning of May, the court departed from Versailles. The princess of Conti, the dutchess of Bourbon, and the princess of Harcourt were in the king's coach. Madame de Grammont, the dutchess de Chevreuse, and the countess de Mailly were in the coach of the dutchess of Orleans. Madame de Maintenon was in the king's hunting calash with mademoiselle de Castéja, whose place had been eagerly coveted by the most distinguished ladies of the court, and even by the princesses. This calash was filled with sacks of money, and bread, which she distributed among the poor as she passed. She observed to the king the excessive poverty which appeared every where; persuaded that to remedy it, it was only necessary that he should know it.

The French had taken towns; they had gained the battles of Fleurus, of Staffarde and Leuze. A numerous army was going to a certain conquest, but in the midst of all this prosperity, agriculture languished: each victory seemed to contribute to the general poverty, and helped to dry up the sources of plenty. They had already raised three hundred millions for extraordinary affairs.

Lewis did not insult the distresses of his subjects by an ill-timed magnificence. He travelled with the utmost simplicity; the coaches stopped in the middle of a field, and the provisions, which had been dressed before, were served on a board laid upon the windows of the four equipages, and formed a table where they took a short repast. It was madame de Maintenon who introduced this frugality, so well calculated, to banish the enervating softness of luxury from an army in the room of that asiatick pomp with which Lewis had been so often reproached, although it was not so much in compliance with his own taste, as to please madame de Montespan, who expected, wherever she went, to find the splendor of Versailles, and the luxury of Clagny.

The king reviewed his own army and that commanded by the duke de Luxembourg, before the ladies, and shewed them a hundred and twenty thousand men, ranged in four lines.

He left the ladies at Dinant, and began his march two days afterwards. Condé, Boufflers and Ximenes invested Namur. Luxembourg's army kept the field to observe the motions of the enemy, who had advanced towards Meheigne, but durst not attack it. Namur was taken before their eyes, although defended with a garrison of nine thousand men.

The town only was attacked at first: several ladies of that province, supposing the French would not venture to form the siege, had taken refuge there, and now sent to desire permission to leave it. Marshal Boufflers refused to grant their request; but the ladies, in whom the fear of the cannons prevailed over every other,

other, resolved to confide in the king's generosity, and came out on foot, attended only by some of their women, who carried their children. The king was greatly moved at this sight, he sent them the next day to Phillippeville, and from thence to Dinant. Madame de Maintenon received them as if they had been French, consoled them with the softest compassion, and, to relieve their necessities, sold all her jewels except one ring, which probably she could not sell.

Whoever has most reason to love his life, is obliged to expose it most. The king appeared in every place where there was the greatest danger; he visited the posts and the trenches, and filled with a generous emulation that brave noblesse who have always placed their highest glory in vanquishing or dying, before the eyes of their king. The whole army perceived that he exposed himself incautiously to every danger, and trembled for the consequence. A Gabion saved his life by breaking the force of a musket-ball, which was aimed directly at him, and which, by going a little aside, only made a contusion in the arm of the count de Toulouse. The king heard the whistling of the ball, and asked whether somebody was not wounded. 'I think something has touched me,' said the young prince. The secretary of state, when he made out the patents for the government of Brittany, mentioned the count's having been wounded at his father's side. 'Erase that,' said the king to him, it is but a trifle for 'my son.'

The garrison withdrew into the citadel, which was much more difficult to be taken; it held out five and twenty days, but was at length reduced, by the artillery of Vauban. This engineer did more, he took fort William by force, fort William, the work of Coehorn, defended by Coehorn himself, who had declared that he would bury himself under its ruins. The duke, on this occasion, behaved like a Condé. The prince was at the head of all. Luxembourg in vain offered the prince of Orange battle: the duke of Chartres, to whom courage only was attributed, shew-

ed a judgment almost equal to his courage ; and the Mousquetaires did their duty exactly.

The courtiers were weary of the slow operations of the siege. The ladies were sent for from Dinant : a stranger would have taken the camp for an enchanted place. Hunting, dancing, wine, and play, filled the intervals of military operations. The king animated the soldiers by his ardor, and by his easy gaiety enlivened his little court : he sent refreshments to the regiment of Dauphine, which had carried the fortress of Cassote sword in hand ; and here follows an account of it by an officer belonging to the regiment.

‘ Madame de Maintenon, accompanied by a great number of noblemen and ladies, arrived, and saw us eat with as much appetite as we had shewn vigour in the assault ; she visited all our tents, and told us at parting, that she intended to give us a collation the next day in the king’s quarters. When we came, one of her domesticks gave each of us a little billet, on which was written *to the abbey of Salsines*. This was a convent of ladies of distinction, about a quarter of a league from Namur. None of the noblemen or officers of the king’s army were allowed to enter, but all the ladies of the court were there, and by a most agreeable reversion of the first laws of custom, they served all the tables with the most gallant air imaginable. Those who had been first informed that madame de Maintenon was to be present at this entertainment, placed two of our officers at the gate to give us notice of it as we arrived. We all went to kiss her hand, which she presented to us with inimitable grace. The ensign of our company, who was about seventeen years of age, handsome, genteel, lively, and extremely witty, perceiving the abbess at the head of the nuns, whom curiosity had led to see so new a spectacle, addressed an elegant speech to madame de Maintenon, at the close of which he intreated her to permit his companions and himself, to salute those veiled ladies.

‘ Madame de Maintenon was a little embarrassed at first by this request, but recollecting herself immediately,

diately, she replied, that she had no right to command those ladies. This was enough for the ensign, he addressed himself to the abbess with so graceful a freedom, that she could not refuse, and the nuns were all saluted by our officers. We had scarce begun to do honour to the delicate repast that was served up to us, and to a liquor which we called the ratafee of Salfines, because the nuns had presented it to us, when the king entered the refectory, attended by the dauphin. He was so well pleased with this spectacle at the first glance, that he stopped at the door to view it at leisure. Madame de Maintenon went to him, and gave him an account of the homage we had paid her, and the kiss which the nuns had granted us. The king laughed excessively, and being desirous to leave us at full liberty, he said to us, 'I will take advantage of the time you sit at table, where you do your duty almost as well as as in another place, to conduct the ladies home for you, whose presence here may possibly be a restraint upon you. Adieu, gentlemen, I leave you in the hands of your amiable hostesses, your advantage is not less than mine.'

The next morning madame de Maintenon sent one of her servants with a message to me, requiring my attendance upon her at ten o'clock: I waited on her accordingly. 'Your colonel, said she to me, has spoke to me of you and your family, I would know from yourself who you are.' I told her my name, and that my parents were the marquis de Langallerie and Henrietta de Nesmond, of the province of Angoumois; and that I had the honour to be her kinsman, which was a spur to me in the road of glory, and a rein to keep me from ever wandering out of it. Two days afterwards she sent me a packet in which were four hundred Lewis d'ors, and these words; 'This present is to furnish you with an equipage suitable to your rank, be wise, be prudent, and I will take care of your fortune.'

'Whether it was that my countenance pleased her, or that she was struck with my name, it is certain that

I was

I was honoured with her favour from the first moment she saw me. She presented me to the king, I obtained a company, and slept upon the roses which she cultivated for me, &c.

The marquis de Langallerie, from whose memoirs I have transcribed these little circumstances, for the truth of which I will not pretend to answer, was great grandson of Theodore Agrippa d'Aubigné. He did not fulfil the expectations of his benefactress, who after having served him with the utmost ardor of friendship, abandoned him entirely. He was obliged to quit the French service, where he was a lieutenant-general, and enter that of Austria, where he suffered many mortifications. It was he who formed the impious scheme of collecting together in the isles of the Archipelago, that people whom the breath of God had scattered over the whole earth. His wife threw herself into the arms of the Landgrave of Hesse, and he ended his days in a prison, where he wrote those memoirs so injurious to the reputation of his kinswoman, and where these words may be found so absurd in the mouth of the wise Catinat. *At court the very walls speak, and madame de Maintenon listens to them.*

During the siege of Namur, madame de Maintenon suffered some little uneasiness from the princess of Harcourt, who was often rude, and sometimes satirical and censorious. When the enemies of that lady endeavoured to irritate madame de Maintenon against her; she replied, 'I love the princess of Harcourt because she has many good qualities; I pardon her, because she is rash and obstinate; and I serve her because the duke of Brancas, her father, formerly served me, it is therefore a debt of gratitude, which I am desirous of discharging.'

The publick joy for the taking of Namur, was interrupted by the loss of the naval battle of la Hogue, where a hundred English vessels beat fifty French, after a long and obstinate contest. The king, when Tourville appeared before him in great dejection, said to him, 'I am very well satisfied with your behaviour, we have
been

‘ been beat, but we have gained glory. It has cost
‘ us some vessels, we will repair this loss, and you
‘ will certainly have your revenge.’

Van Beuning speaking of these two events added,
‘ We have cut the king of France’s hair, but that
‘ will be grown again by the next year: the king of
‘ France has cut off our arm, which we can never
‘ recover.’ However, Namur was retaken, and the
‘ Ocean no more saw a French fleet.

CHAPTER LII.

*The battles of Steenkirk, and of Nerwinde: the death
of Luxembourg.*

LEWIS returned immediately to Versailles, his
army, and that of William, being in sight of each
other. This precipitate departure gave occasion for
many different conjectures; some said, that he sacri-
ficed his glory to the fears of madame de Maintenon,
others maintained that this dishonourable retreat was
owing to the suspicions he entertained of his brother,
whom, in his absence he had made lieutenant-general,
and whose popularity had awakened his jealousy. But
madame de Maintenon was neither capable of giving
him advice injurious to his reputation, nor the king of
listening to the mean suggestion of envy. Those who
pretend to penetrate into the views and designs of
princes, always ascribe them to motives inconsistent
with their character. The allies charged Lewis with
fearing William, and flying from him, and the hugue-
nots, who had taken refuge in foreign countries, en-
deavoured to render his courage doubtful. Would
you be believed? advance an absurdity: we are assured
by a hundred historians, that a man who made war
during his whole life, had not even the first virtue of
warriors. It was related by a certain author, that in
a council where they were deliberating if they should
offer battle, a general officer perceiving the king turn
pale at that word, proved in a long speech, that they
ought

ought to avoid fighting, and was rewarded with a marshal's staff, as if he had gained the battle.

These injurious reports even reached the king, and without doubt were partly the cause of that ostentation of intrepidity so apparent in his conduct at the sieges of Mons and Namur. 'My son, said he to the dauphin, a king's post is that where there is most danger.'

Lewis had not the impetuous valour of an Alexander, but he had that calm and steady courage which made him superior to the danger which he distinctly saw, that valour which alone belongs to a king.

However, the king, by not ending the campaign, suffered an opportunity to escape him, which would have compleated his glory. The duke de Luxembourg had the honour to fight again with the prince of Orange, and to vanquish him in the battle of Steenkirk, the most bloody one that had been fought since that of Rocroy.

The duke of Luxembourg was unexpectedly attacked by the allied army. One of his brigades was put into disorder, and the enemies had made themselves masters of an eminence at the head of his camp, and had taken possession of the cannon which was placed there to prevent any access to it. He is already almost vanquished before he knows that he is betrayed. The whole army is lost unless this post can be recovered, he attacks it three times, three times is driven back, he puts himself at the head of the brigade of guards, he flies from rank to rank, his bravest officers blame the excess of his ardour, which exposes him to imminent danger. Montmorency falls before his eyes, wounded by a musket ball, as he was placing himself before his father to cover him from a horrible discharge, he eagerly seeks William, who, covered with dust and blood, is every where in an instant, he brings back to the battle platoons, who now blushed that they had given way. Luxembourg had all that was most great and honourable in the French monarchy fighting on his side, Bourbon, Conti, Vendôme,

Vendôme, the duke de Chartres, who, being wounded, retired a moment till his surgeon bled him, and then rushed into the battle with sword in hand, and with a horrible carnage he recovered the contended post, and forced William to fly.

This victory filled the court and city with excessive joy. This is the man, cried they, whom Louvois chose rather to keep in the bastile than to put at the head of our armies. When these first transports had subsided, the envious courtiers endeavoured to lessen the glory of Luxembourg, they exclaimed against his easy credulity for suffering himself to be imposed upon by the letter of a treacherous spy. The king said, 'What would he not have done if he had not been surprised.'

His majesty went some days afterwards to Saint-Cyr, the superiour congratulating him upon his success; the king replied, 'You ought rather to make me a compliment of condolence, for I have taken but one city. Your generals, Sire, said she, have acted by your orders. Ah, resumed the king, they are better soldiers than I am.'

The ladies of Saint-Lewis merited this obliging attention in the king, they loved the state, although they hated the world, and they still unite the virtues of good citizens and pious nuns. A book was published, entitled *the lamentation of the ladies of Saint-Cyr for the retaking of Namur*. I have just read this work, it is an insolent satire, in which there is nothing true but the title.

The king was extremely desirous of beating the prince of Orange once at least. He departed for Flanders, and madame de Maintenon attended him again in this campaign. But it was William's destiny to be defeated only by the duke of Luxembourg, and to be so every year. Lewis was taken ill at Quenoy, and returned hastily to Versailles. Luxembourg eagerly sought to fight, the prince of Orange avoided it. He had intrenched himself upon mount Saint-Andrew, the marshal threatened Liege; William
and

and the elector of Bavaria drew near to defend it; Luxembourg now thought of nothing but attacking them. On this occasion, the prince of Conti's advice and the intrepidity of the duke de Chartres was of great service to him, he carried the village of Nerwinde, which cost the lives of twenty thousand men, He wrote to the king upon a scrap of paper, in these terms; 'Artaignan, who saw the action, will give your majesty an exact account of it. Your enemies have performed wonders; your troops have acted still better: as for myself, Sire, I have no other merit, than in having executed your orders; you bid me attack a town, and give the enemy battle, I have taken the town and I have gained the battle.' The prince of Orange in his rage and despair of this defeat, wrote thus to one of his friends. 'I believe I am never to vanquish this hump-back.' 'Hump-back,' said Luxembourg, when he heard of that expression, how should he know it? he never saw my back.'

The death of Luxembourg put an end to this success: a message was sent to the king to inform him that the duke's physicians had no hopes of his life. Madame de Maintenon set the whole community of Saint-Cyr to prayers, and Lewis, with tears, said to Fagon, 'Monsieur, I conjure you do all for him that you would do for me.'

Father Bourdaloue attended him and received his last sighs. 'I have not lived like him,' said the father, 'but I wish I may die as well.' Luxembourg, tho' not pious, had always shewn great reverence for religion. No general ever had more amiable qualities. His camp was a seat of pleasure and magnificence; he loved amusements, but they never intruded upon his hours of business, or retarded a moment the operations of war; his judgment was clear, his courage cool but steady, he gave his orders with great readiness and exactness. It was said by those who understood the military art, that he could judge of the enemy's motions by a single glance, but that he was not
so

so capable of judging of their designs, that his mind being more employed in considering how he should gain a battle, than in planning the operations of a campaign, he knew how to fight but not how to vanquish.

Father de la Rue pronounced his funeral oration, and drew a horrid picture of the prince of Orange, which the king obliged him to suppress; thinking it ridiculous and mean to allow an enemy to be insulted in the pulpit, against whom he had an army of an hundred thousand men in the field. Lewis was not willing to treat as a tyrant and usurper, a prince who was now king of a free people, and whom he would be soon obliged to treat as a brother. Peace was drawing near, but the divines had kindled another kind of war in the kingdom, which was not likely to end so soon.

Of Quietism.

MADAME de Maintenon had so great a share in the troubles occasioned by the spreading of this sect, that the reader will doubtless not be surpris'd to find this affair treated at length in her memoirs. Here we shall see innocence oppressed; a cautious and vigilant king deceived; a phantom of heresy combated with outrageous zeal; an ambassador who publickly disobeyes the orders of his master; a father of the church transported with indecent rage; an innovator obedient and resigned; many contradictions will be found, but it is not for me to endeavour to make men consistent with themselves.

CHAPTER LIIL

Of Madame Guion.

JANE-Maria Bouviers de la Mothe, was born at Montargis; at eighteen years of age she was married to the son of the celebrated Guion, who owed his immense fortune and his nobility to the noble

noble undertaking of the canal of Briare. This lady from her earliest youth applied her thoughts to heavenly things, the liveliness of her imagination, her tender and inflexible mind, made her misfortunes and her piety her crime. Her growing inclination for *spirituality* was strengthened by the counsels of her directors, and by the opposition of her husband. Francis de la Combe, a monk, a native of Tonon in Savoy, a libertine in his youth, in his old age a devotee, and a mystic, mortified and devout on his appearance, but vain, subtle and ambitious, acquired the direction of her conscience, and reduced her erroneous opinions to a system.

Madame Guion being left a widow at two and twenty years of age, with immense riches, and a mind wholly weaned from the sublunary world, resolved to labour for the salvation of her neighbours. Father de la Combe persuaded her that she was equal to this great work, either because he was in love with her, and would therefore prevail upon her to follow him, or that he really thought her qualified to preach virtue and piety to her sex.

Madame Guion entered into the views of her director, not because she was ambitious of being at the head of a sect, but only to glorify God *. The suffering's of Molinos did not terrify her, she did not believe there was any similarity in their opinions, however, her husband had upon his death-bed said to her, ' I am afraid the singularity of your notions will draw you into much trouble.'

No woman ever had qualities more proper to form a sect: her person was full of grace, her countenance noble, yet sweet; the most engaging softness was in her eyes, her mouth was formed for persuasion; she was eloquent with all the graces of simplicity, lively, gay, insinuating, with all the enthusiasm of devotion; in a word, madame Guion was the most lovely heretic that had yet appeared; her piety did not hinder her from

* The bishop of Agen's manuscripts. Page 384.

from displaying a most beautiful neck, from an extreme attention to dress, from valuing herself upon a distinguishing elegance of manners, from dancing at a ball, with all the triumph of conscious grace and beauty; from going to church, to be viewed by her lover, rather than to invoke her love (that was the name she gave Jesus Christ) from loving those charms, which even in their decline, seemed to inspire new desires, from recalling to her remembrance what love had said to her, after she had the small-pox. If I had desired that thou shouldst be beautiful, I would have suffered thee to remain as thou wert: when thou wouldst have made vows of chastity only for a time, and couldst not endure that any woman should be thought beautiful near thee *: from choosing for the preceptor to her son, a young agreeable abbé, tender, polite, assiduous, and more employed in teaching Latin to the mother than the son †. She was incessantly persecuted by her selfish relations, always languishing with illness, yet always charming, she loved God, she loved the world, and made both these passions agree.

Madame Guion possessed a great share of wit, and even of that true kind which a celebrated writer || denies her, probably because he has not read her works. See for instance her *short way* and the third part of her life, from page 147 to page 252, the reader will there find her doctrine explained, with all the art of reasoning and subtilty of wit. Her doctrine was not quietism, but approached very near it in the expression, and notwithstanding this apparent resemblance, she defended it against that imputation. How can it be imagined that she wanted wit, who was capable of discovering that meta-

* Life of madame Guion, written by herself, part the first.

† An account of quietism, by the abbé Phillipeaux, a very partial writer, but well informed.

|| The age of Lewis the fourteenth the chapter upon quietism.

metaphysical system which Pope has expressed in such beautiful poetry.

‘ God, says she, governs mankind by an universal providence ; for although in his dispensations there is a particular order which regards each individual, it is nevertheless so dependant upon the general order, that were he to swerve ever so little from it, he would break the connexion and throw all things into confusion. The disorders of the world, the miseries of men, the overthrow of empires, are the necessary result of this general order, and that which to us appears irregular, on account of our manner of conceiving things, is a truly admirable order according to divine wisdom ; so that particular disorder, preserves general order, and this is general order. God establishes, he destroys what he has established, and perpetuates things by this destruction.’*

Madame Guion full of that ardent zeal which we always have for our own opinions when we believe them new, or peculiar to ourselves, went to propagate them in those countries to which her *love* conducted her ; her extreme liberality enforced them. She preached an absolute self renunciation, and that pure and disinterested love rejected by the wise, but by tender minds felt in its full force. She traversed the countries, of Gex, Dauphiné, Piedmont, where, persecuted by the inquisition of Vercell, she obeyed her *love*, who told her that the hour of martyrdom was not yet come, and flew to a place of greater safety. She had made proselytes in the great Chartreuse, but she always despised the glory of forming a sect. Her mind was weak, she had no ambition ; when her body was opened no part in it was found except her heart, which however was a little impaired, and her brain, which was entire, out like that of a child, only a little more humid. If all mysticks were to be opened, would they not be found like madame Guion ?

To

* See her defence. Volume the third page 269.

To the weak and tender she gave only the milk of her maxims, and her *short way*, but when they were grown capable of receiving more solid nourishment, they sought it, by launching upon the impetuous waves of her *torrents*, for that was the title of one of her books, which were all printed with the approbation of some doctors of divinity, and all curious from the singularity of their style. She gained a great number of disciples, her doctrine flattered pride, and indulged indolence, her proselytes went on to perfection, through paths strewed with flowers; the meer intention was in the sight of God sufficient. The ecclesiasticks, thought they were dispensed from saying their breviary, the faithful from active piety, the women from the care of guarding against their vapours, old sinners entered flying into the chamber of the spouse. To love only, was necessary to perfection. Madame Guion laid down true principles, her proselytes drew practical consequences from them, which seemed just, but were in reality abominable.

Her mind became disordered by long fasting; she prophesied that all hell would rise against her, that the woman should be pregnant by the inward spirit, and that the dragon should soon place himself before her to devour her. At her return to Paris, the prophecy was accomplished, her enemies waited for her there.

CHAPTER LIV.

Harlai de Chanvalon.

THE Diocese of Paris was then governed by monsieur de Harlai de Chanvalon, a prelate who might be said to have glided into the church rather than to have entered it. Monsieur Vincent de Paule, who had been admitted into the council of conscience, under Anne of Austria, had formerly excluded Harlai from the coadjutorship of Rouen. Monsieur de Perefex took an opportunity when Vincent was hindered by some indisposition from coming to the council,

council, to propose Harlai. Hence the hatred of that prelate against monsieur de Vincent, against his institution, and against all who resembled him.

Jan. 1660.] Harlai, while archbishop of Rouen, filled his whole diocese with the scandal of his debaucheries. His loose conduct procured him the archbishoprick of Paris. The king and madame de Montespan were afraid of a too rigid censor, they flattered themselves that a pastor immersed in vice would not dare to reproach them with their guilty passion :* they were not mistaken. Harlai was silent and suffered all. The mistress found in him an assiduous courtier, and the prince a convenient casuist. He one day sent for a painter to take the design of Conflans, with orders to draw all he should see without being seen. The artist caused this plan to be shewn to the king. There my lord archbishop was seen in a closet, placing a nosegay in the bosom of the Sultana of the day.

A pleasing form, great elegance of manners, the talent of speaking well, and a prodigious memory, hid part of his faults. When he gave audience he would embrace the most disagreeable monks with the same ardour as the most charming of his mistresses. He would often enquire the name of a man whom a moment before he had almost stifled with kindness. He treated the affairs of the church with the same levity, as an amour, and his eloquence was as persuasive in the assembly of the clergy, as powerful at the toilet of a lady.

The king insensibly distrusted the delusion of his tongue, and the ecclesiasticks, the sincerity of his kindness. Lewis looked upon the sparkling sallies of his imagination, as snares laid for his prudence, and the priests regarded his promises as denials, and his threats as meer formalities. The people sung ballads upon their archbishop. There was no church discipline in his diocese. Tenets were maintained with great

* Memoirs of the bishop of Agen.

great rigour, morals were abandoned wholly to providence. He no longer sought to acquire the praises of his king, and was only solicitous to guard against his reproofs. He used his utmost endeavours to stifle those reports which might inform him of his simonies, or his libertinism. He obtained a pardon for a scandalous crime, by entering into all the designs of the court in prejudice to the order, of which he was the head.

The comptroller general was always sure of finding in the first ecclesiastick in the kingdom a ready promoter of the free gift, one who was greatly concerned for the necessities of the state, and lavish of the revenues of the church. The prelate's ardour to serve the king on these occasions was so excessive, that the minister was obliged to restrain it. Hence these immense debts to which the clergy are subject, hence those loans, which by making it more easy to levy taxes, make the taxes more frequent.

In proportion as Lewis grew weary of women, Harlai saw his interest with him decrease. The king repented his having given him the first dignity of the church, he deprived him of the list of benefices, he no longer spoke to him with his wonted kindness, he reproved him severely for his scandalous life, and his antechamber became a desert.

CHAPTER LV.

Madame Guion imprisoned and set at liberty.

1687.] **A**S soon as madame Guion arrived at Paris, the archbishop obtained an order from the king, to confine her in the convent of the visitation in the street Saint-Antony; she was accused of having an intrigue with father de la Combe, her faithful friend, who was put into the bastille: it was reported that this monk had taken advantage of his penitent's frenzy, to violate her chastity. She produced Catos, her woman, who never quitted her a moment,

ment, to witness to her honour. She was answered that Catos had shared her pleasures. The archbishop sent Cheron his official to examine her, a man who was so infamous for the irregularity of his life, that the prioress was in doubt whether she should admit him into the convent.

Madame Guion edified the nuns by her piety, made profelytes of some, and raised compassion in all; in the world she had many partizans, and many protectors in the court. However madame de la Maison-fort, her cousin, was the only person who ventured to defend her openly. This lady was descended from an ancient family in the province of Berry, she had been canonesse of Poussay, twelve years, an abbey into which the nobility alone were admitted; she had wit, beauty, a lively imagination, great candor, an infinite sweetness in her manners; being persecuted by an unjust mother-in-law, the abbé Gobelin introduced her to madame de Maintenon, who admitted her into Saint-Cyr, to regulate the education of the young ladies; madame de la Maison-fort acquitted herself of this task so well as to merit the esteem and confidence of the foundress, but her mind had taken too gay a turn to permit her to make the absolute vows, and she was too haughty to pay obedience to a woman. She relished madame Guion's doctrine, yet could not resolve to follow her advice and renounce the world. Madame Guion often said to her, 'to govern you, cousin, a square cap is necessary.'

Madame de la Maison-fort at the intreaty of monsieur Jasseau, a priest of the mission, represented to madame de Maintenon that her kinswoman was only guilty of an excess of love for God. That all the calumnies which were spread against her, were invented by her relations, who coveted her estate; that the archbishop of Paris knew her innocence, but was resolved to persecute her till she consented to the marriage of her daughter with the marquis de Chanvalon.

Madame de Maintenon mentioned the affair to the king, whom she found greatly prejudiced against
madame

madame Guion, by father de la Chaize. That jesuit perhaps thought it his duty to comfort the archbishop for the diminution of his power, by soothing his passions; he disposed of all benefices as he pleased, but he acted with so much prudence, that Harlai thought himself the absolute master of de la Chaize.

Madame de Maintenon was herself prejudiced against the woman she protected, by father de la Mothe, the brother-in-law of madame Guion; this artful monk counterfeited the hand writing of father de la Combe, and put his name to all the blasphemies and wild extravagancies of Molinos.

Madame de Miramion was desirous of judging herself whether madame Guion was as criminal or as mad as she was said to be; she went to the convent where she was confined, she interrogated the prioress, and hearing nothing but praises of the prisoner, she made a favourable report to madame de Maintenon, who pleased at being undeceived, and grieved that she had suffered herself to be prejudiced, promised to speak again to the king.

Madame de la Maison-fort engaged the dutchesses de Charost, Chevreuse, Beuvilliers, Mortemar, the purity of whose faith was unsuspected, to solicit for her kinswoman. How ridiculous, said they, is it in monsieur the archbishop, who it is well known has no aversion to women, to seek the ruin of one who loves nothing but God. Let this austere man first endeavour to suppress the licentiousness of manners which now prevails, and then we will allow him to exert his zeal against what he calls heresy.

The king importuned by madame de Maintenon, and by the murmurs of the court but half informed of the truth, desired that a petition might be presented to him, and upon reading of it, ordered that the prisoner should be released. The archbishop, durst not complain, but was willing to save his honour at least.

Before he would see madame Guion at liberty, he endeavoured to make her sign a writing which was to prove that he was not mistaken, and that she was in

reality a heretick. She refused to sign this paper, and maintained that there were no heresies in her books, since she had no intention to introduce any.

Madame de Maintenon suffering the prelate to satisfy his vanity, with these forms, caused madame de Guion to be told, that it was her will, she should sign the paper, that she would inform the king of the violence that was used to her, and that at present it was of the utmost importance to her to get out of the hands of this prince of priests.

Madame Guion obeyed her protectress and was released from her confinement. Madame de Maintenon had insisted upon her signing the paper immediately, because she thought it was of no importance to a woman, whether she was deceived or not in matters of religion, and because she knew that her enemies would again endeavour to prejudice the king, from whom they had already procured an order for transferring madame Guion to a prison two hundred leagues distant from Paris. So easy it is for men in power to deceive the prince, and to exercise the most publick tyranny under his name, when all access to justice is denied by the abuse of arbitrary authority.

The dutchesses de Chevreuse and Beauvilliers, the princess d'Harcourt, the marchioness de Montchevreuil, and madame de Miramion congratulated madame Guion upon her recovered liberty, and invited her to Versailles. Monsieur de Charôt lent her his apartments there; the duke de Bethune his father, who had been involved in the disgrace of Fouquet whose sister he had married, when banished to Montargis, had been received by madame Guion's father into his house, and transmitted to his children the gratitude he owed a family who had succoured him in his distress. Madame Guion's doctrine was relished at court, and in a place where fortune is only adored, there were found perhaps for the first time, hearts which worshipped God in spirit and in truth.

Madame

Madame de Maintenon had a curiosity to see and to converse with so extraordinary a person; the dutchesses were eager to accompany madame Guion in this visit, her beauty, her misfortunes, that powerful persuasion in her looks and her words, her sweetness, her patience, and that talent so peculiar to herself of speaking of God in a manner wholly sublime, all joined to convince madame de Maintenon that she had never made a better use of her power.

She expressed the tenderest affection for her, her esteem and her confidence in her encreased every day. The visits of the new saint were frequent, no longer rapid hours, but whole days were spent with her, the oftener she saw her, the more she was charmed; was she oppressed with uneasiness, or her spirits exhausted with fatigue, madame Guion was sent for; and her conversation all celestial and sublime was alike fitted to please, and to console her.

Madame de Miramion received her into her community in defiance of the archbishop. Madame Guion came out sometimes to visit madame de Charôt at Benne, from whence she went to Saint-Cyr, where she staid several days, and distributed her books among the community. The ladies of Saint-Lewis loved her thro' the force of example and inclination: and while madame de Maintenon blest heaven for the happy success of her cares, error insinuated itself into Saint-Cyr, under the mask of piety.

CHAPTER LVI.

The abbé Fenelon.

THE number of this fair visionary's disciples encreased every day, and she very soon acquired one who was of more value than all the others. One day she heard him named, and her whole soul was filled with extreme tenderness. She fancied that love united him intimately to her, and she seemed to have spiritually adopted him. I saw him, says

‘ she, * the next day, I inwardly felt that he did not
 ‘ like me, and I was sensible of a sweet violence
 ‘ which made me wish to shed my heart into his, but
 ‘ I found his heart did not understand me, and God
 ‘ only knows what anguish I suffered that night. I
 ‘ saw him again, the next day, we continued silent for
 ‘ some moments, the cloud dissipated a little, but he
 ‘ was still far from what I wished; eight whole days
 ‘ I suffered torments in expressible, and then I found
 ‘ myself united to him without any obstacles. Our uni-
 ‘ on has ever since been growing more perfect, more
 ‘ pure, more ardent, more ineffable, my soul seems to
 ‘ have a perfect agreement with his. Oh, my son!
 ‘ my heart is bound to the heart of Jonathan, I
 ‘ should die if there should ever be the least difference
 ‘ between thee and me, between God and us. Oh
 ‘ my son!’ How well calculated were these expressi-
 ‘ ons to touch the tender and virtuous heart of the
 ‘ author of *Telemachus*!

The abbé Fenelon was born in Périgord, of noble
 parents; he was brought up by the bishop of Sarlat,
 his uncle: in his youth he applied himself more to
 the study of the scriptures, than the fathers; he was
 successfully employed in the conversion of prote-
 stants, and was made superiour of the new catholicks,
 but accused of jansenism, on account of his connexi-
 ons with Laval, bishop of Rochelle, and Barillon, bi-
 shop of Luçon: he was twice named to a bishoprick
 by the king, and twice rejected by the confessor, un-
 der pretence that he was a friend to Port-royal. Fe-
 nelon at length removed all the suspicions that were
 entertained against him, his sermons laid the foundati-
 on of his fame, and the christian death of the old
 duke of Mortemar, whom he had prepared for that
 dreadful passage, compleated it.

The king had appointed the duke de Beauvillieres
 governor to the duke of Burgundy, but the post of
 preceptor

* Life of madame Guion part the third, page 102.

preceptor to the young prince was still vacant, and greatly solicited ; the king left the choice of a proper person for this trust to the governor of his grandson, who immediately fixed upon the abbé Fenelon, whom he had been long acquainted with. However it was necessary that he should entirely clear him from the imputation of jansenism ; he had recourse to madame de Maintenon, and in drawing the character of the abbé Fenelon, placed his virtues and abilities in the strongest light.

Madame de Maintenon consulted separately the abbé Tronçon, superiour of Saint-Sulpice, who extolled Fenelon's piety and deplored his misfortunes ; Herbert curate of Versailles, who said, he would answer for his submission to the church ; father Valois, who assured her, that Fenelon was as much a jesuit as himself ; Bossuet, who declared, that in the clergy of the second order, he knew no one that equalled him. Madame de Maintenon told the king, that it would be happy for the duke of Burgundy to be educated by a man, whom so many persons of characters so opposite, agreed in praising. Fenelon was appointed preceptor to the young prince, and the choice was so greatly applauded, that the academy of Angers proposed him for the subject of the prize verses which were composed every year.

Fenelon was at once the favourite, and the Saint of the court ; his conversation was eagerly coveted by all, but he gave it only to a few select and useful friends ; he reconciled all the easy gaiety and insinuating politeness so necessary in the conversation of ladies, with all the modesty becoming his function. With the duke of Burgundy his pupil, he was plain, easy, and instructive ; with Bossuet sublime ; with the courtiers, gay, lively, sparkling : his manners were irresistably pleasing, he had great strength of imagination, the most persuasive eloquence, a style full of grace and vigour, he felt and inculcated the love of God, merely for the sake of God alone, unbiaised by hope, uninfluenced by fear. The fire in his eyes denoted the most imperious passions, and his conduct the most amazing conquest of

them.* Such was the proselyte whom madame de Guion placed at the head of Quietism.

Never was there any heresy more agreeably insinuated, and the same cause by hastening its progress, hastened its ruin likewise. These new hereticks were more feared, than condemned; in a hypocritical court they were thought too sincere, and too amiable in a court that was no longer so.

The abbé Fenelon did not yield at first, he made objections; madame Guion answered them. 'My son,' said she, to him, are you satisfied, does the doctrine of prayer enter into your head?' 'Yes, madam,' replied the abbé, and even by every door.

Such was the ascendant this woman had over the minds of all who conversed with her, that the most learned divines, such as Nicole, Bossuet, Boileau, Gaillard, although greatly prejudiced against her, and still more against her *short way*, saw her, heard her, and were undeceived. When they quitted her they resumed their former sentiments, which they could only hold by seeing her no more, her beauty doubtless had a great share in the glory of the seduction.

Fenelon delivered himself entirely up to the study of mystical books, his imagination was enflamed, in madame Guion, he saw only a soul burning with divine love,

* The abbé Philippeaux, draws a very different picture of him. This unjust writer represents him as ambitious, artful, inconstant and malicious. It was ambition, according to him, which induced him to undertake the conversion of the huguenots; to be zealous in the performance of good works, to endeavour to regain the friendship of the bishop of Meaux, to hold pious conferences at Saint-Cyr and Versailles: it was artifice to advise madame de la Maison-fort to obey. He sees nothing in his letters, his maxims and his whole conduct, but subtilty and deceit, he finds something shocking in his countenance, and wildness in his eyes, although all who have seen the archbishop of Cambray acknowledge that he had great sweetness in his looks, and gracefulness in his person,

love, full of simplicity and truth, whose very errors were respectable, since they had their source from the most holy and most sublime principles, he found himself in her, he found his own candor, his piety, his disinterestedness, she was persecuted, and Fenelon had the tenderest sensibility for the unhappy; a virtue so useless in the world, so fatal in a court.

He disliked the archbishop of Paris, and he declared his sentiments very freely, upon the voluptuousness of his life, his deceitful kindness, and his passion for power. 'What is the archbishop of Paris doing?' said the 'courtiers one day.' 'He is giving dispensations,' answered Fenelon.

CHAPTER LVII.

The progress of madame Guion.

THE progress made by these devout contemplatists, alarmed many of the ecclesiasticks. In Paris, where every thing is regulated by the fashion, and even religion not excepted, all conversation was now held in the unintelligible jargon of the Mysticks, so convenient for those who have no certain ideas of their own. Treville, formerly a celebrated libertine, but then a Mystic, drew up an abstract of the doctrine taught by the fathers. The abbé Duguet was secretly inclined to this sect*. Corbinelli, who from a Philosopher became an Atheist, from an Atheist a Christian, and from a Christian a Quietist, presided at the house of Madame le Maigre, where the wits among the Mysticks met, to make a romance of religion†. Some of the ladies of St. Cyr discovered to madame de Maintenon, that, in the discourses of madame Guion, they found something which insensibly led them towards God. Madame de Maintenon, without examining any further, and perhaps deceived by

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* Madame de Coulange's Letters.

† Madame de Sevigny's Letters.

the fervour of her devotion, which bordered too near upon spirituality, permitted them to be directed by her.

Whenever madame Guion went to Saint Cyr, she was listened to as an oracle, and attended home again like a saint : the ladies of St. Cyr, who were not pious before, heard her affecting rhapsodies, and became so ; and those who had been always devout, increased every day in fervour.

It is not surprising, that she should find disciples among so many tender and flexible imaginations, ready to admit every sentiment of piety. With women, domestick employments, the cabals of the court, and the minute practices of religion, fill up alike the same vacuity.

Madame Guion was for four years particularly distinguished by madame de Maintenon, who often invited her to her table ; and made use of her insinuating eloquence, to inspire some young ladies with a taste for piety, whose examples might have an influence upon the rest of the court.

Three times a week they had assemblies at the Hôtels de Chevreuse and Beauvilliers, where they had contrived little apartments for that purpose. There, after a slight repast, to which no domestick was admitted, they entered into conferences upon spiritual matters ; and settled many affairs which tended to advance the reign of God. The abbé Fenelon presided at these holy mysteries. The courtiers murmured at these meetings, the secret of which they were not able to discover ; but the king was convinced, that wherever madame de Maintenon was, there could be no conspiracy but against the corruption of the world.

It will doubtless be thought surprising, that madame de Maintenon, whose judgment appeared so solid, should be seduced by a woman who pretended to revelations, extasies, and miracles, *whom inward grace so overpowered, that she was obliged to have her laces cut, lest she should be stifled ; who when in prayer scarce able to breathe, thro' the superabundance of grace, communicated it in silence to those about her.*

But madame de Maintenon carried her views higher : she passed over the exterior, and considered the principles,

ciples, which were really admirable. To love God solely for himself; to sacrifice to him one's understanding, will, and happiness; to consent, like Moses, to be erased from the Book of Life, that the Eternal may be glorified; to listen in silence to that inward voice which speaks to and invites us; to lose one's self in the contemplation of the most amiable of all Beings: nothing surely could be better calculated for the seduction of a truly Christian soul.

Her imprisonment in the convent of St. Mary, had cured madame Guion of her most ridiculous absurdities. The abbé Fenelon had allowed her to retain her incomprehensible style, her extasies, her pious reveries, and *the overflowings of grace, which, like an opened sluice, discharged itself with the utmost precipitation*; but he had suppressed the prophecies; he had improved her understanding; and she no longer affected to utter doctrines of an extraordinary nature, with which she had before alarmed so many persons who hated and opposed all novelties in religion; and whose minds were still filled with the recent condemnation of the unfortunate Molinos.

At length the continual presence of Madame de Maintenon abated the fervor of her imagination; and madame Guion, unperceived by herself, grew lukewarm in her devotion, through respect for her protectress. It is therefore still more surprising, that madame de Maintenon should have made use of this woman in her views of reforming the court; that she should have succeeded, and have had influence enough to preserve her from ridicule and contempt.

CHAPTER LVIII.

Godet des Marais.

THE abbé Gobelin was, by his infirmities, become almost useless to St. Cyr; and by his servility unnecessary to madame de Maintenon. Dazzled with an elevation, which ought not to have surprised him who had been a witness to the progress of it, he so great-

ly perplexed madame de Maintenon, by the constraint he laid on himself, and displeased her so much by the reverence and respect he thought due to the rank she filled, that she now consulted him but seldom. He was so affected with that greatness, which madame de Maintenon endeavoured to conceal from him, that, in the simplicity of his heart, he once said to a friend, 'Do you not know her power is so great, that she may have our heads struck off, if the whim should take her?'

Madame de Maintenon had for some time addressed herself to father Bourdaloue, who would grant her only two visits a year, on account of his great application to preaching. The jesuits would have been better pleased, if she had not admitted his excuse; but she revered the talents of this great man, and respected his scruples; she durst not deprive the church of his labours, and thought his time would be better employed in converting millions of souls, than in taking care of one; and she willingly sacrificed her inclinations and her interest to the publick good. It is also not improbable, that she was afraid of raising the jealousy of father de la Chaise, by giving him a colleague so greatly superior to himself.

She knew many ecclesiasticks, but would not venture to chuse a confessor amongst them; she trembled lest she should fall into the hands of a Jansenist, or any one who had more ambition than piety; she wanted an ecclesiastick who would confine all his cares to her and St. Cyr; she consulted Tiberge and Brisacier, in whom she had a confidence, which they merited by their candor and piety; and which they did not preserve by adulation. These gentlemen, instead of turning to their own advantage the overtures made by madame de Maintenon, proposed monsieur des Marais and monsieur de Fenelon; both pleased her, Fenelon by his gentleness, des Marais by his austerity.

Observing that they were intimate friends, she resolved to put herself under the care of both, till a more perfect knowledge of their characters had determined her choice; she placed them in the number of those ministers who had the care of St. Cyr; she put their capacity and their zeal to several trials; and in all affairs, which

which she confided to them, she discovered in both so much knowledge, candour, and true piety, that she was still perplexed how to chuse between them. The desire of securing her salvation, however painful to be effected, the great need she had of an austere, vigilant, and inflexible man, who might always recal her to her duty, in a place where every thing has a tendency to make it be forgot, inclined her powerfully towards des Marais; the affecting piety, the pleasing enthusiasm, the elegant manners, the brilliant wit of Fenelon, drew her towards him.

Still attached to the world, she was afraid the former would be too severe, and make too few allowances for the little weaknesses connected with her situation; and that the second, in theory, so wholly disengaged from the world, would make use of his wit, to smooth the road to heaven for her, and perhaps to govern her. The person and behaviour of des Marais were disgusting; Fenelon had too many graces of figure, too many charms in his conversation. In this uncertainty she still made use of both, and balanced one by the other.

The abbé des Marais was very willing to direct St. Cyr; but he had a much higher idea of this convent than of her who had founded it. Madame de Maintenon was greatly suspected by him; he thought her the king's mistress, or at least, that she had formerly been so. When Tiberge and Brisacier proposed to him to be her confessor, he was ready to answer like Joseph, *who, I? far be this sin from me.*

They undeceived him, yet he would not yield; he was afraid of breathing the contagious air of Versailles: madame de Maintenon he thought was a woman attached to the world, who only desired a director, for the appearance of devotion: he refused to waste his time in suffering the inequalities of temper, the capricious whims, and perhaps the treachery of a woman of the court. His superiors, who knew her better, commanded him to accept the charge of her conscience. Fenelon, more conversant with the world than Marais, well knew what the conduct of madame

de Maintenon had been, and what was her present situation.

The abbé des Marais was soon undeceived. In madame de Maintenon he saw a woman divested of all pride, modest, humble, ready to receive instruction, filled with earnest desires to love God, and afraid of offending him. He performed the duties of his function with all the ardour of a zeal incapable of temporising; and the abbé Fenelon acquitted himself of his, with all the insinuating softness, and affectionate piety of a Quietist, and a wit.

May 7, 1691.] The abbé Gobelin died: madame de Maintenon was sincerely afflicted: his place was filled by Marais, and by Fenelon, who together directed that conscience, which, regulating all others, was, if the expression may be allowed, the publick conscience.

An Order, accustomed to power, and which well knows how to use it, murmured, it was said, at this preference; and that father Bourdaloue replied to madame de Maintenon, who was assuring him of her esteem, 'Madame, have less friendship for me, and more for the society to which I belong.' They added, that the Jesuits published at Lyons an edition of Scaron's works, in which they inserted an epigram injurious to the reputation of his widow. It was an indecent rhyme, which produced a very indifferent jest.

The Jansenists liked neither of the directors; and the Jesuits began to despair of inspiring Fenelon with a zeal such as their own. His principles indeed were the same as theirs, but he was too mild to oppress others for not thinking like himself. Such is the fate of those men, who though perhaps sufficiently steady in their opinions, are too moderate in their dispositions; they are almost as much hated by their own party, as by the one they oppose.

The see of Chartres becoming vacant, by the death of monsieur de Villeroi, madame de Maintenon was overjoyed that she had an opportunity of giving to this diocese a man, who, by its contiguity to Versailles, might still continue her confessor. The consideration of her
own

own interest, and that of St. Cyr, which could not have a better director than one who knew it so well, made her break through the law she had imposed on herself, never to ask the king for a bishoprick, and she proposed the abbé des Marais for that of Chartres.

The person who went to carry him the news of his promotion, found him on his knees before a crucifix, in a little room in which there was no other furniture than one chair and one table; and for hangings, a map of the Holy Land. The abbé burst into tears; and refused to load himself with so heavy a burden, and could only be brought to accept of it by the intreaties of madame de Maintenon, and the authority of his superiors.

His conduct, in this high place, proved his tears and his denials to be sincere; and that he had a right to *desire as a good work*, what his humility had rejected as a dignity. He laboured incessantly at St. Cyr, and against madame Guion; against Fenelon her friend; against declared Jansenists, and base impostors, who signed the formulary, and despised it at the same time; against those who abjured Jansenius, and defended him in Quênel. The king offered him afterwards a cardinal's hat, and the post of counsellor of state to the church. Des Marais refused all: he was neither fit for the falsehoods of the conclave, nor the pomp of the purple. 'He has,' said madame de Maintenon, 'as little of the cardinal in him as the bishop.'

CHAPTER LIX.

The first reports concerning Quietism.

MEAN time, they were more fervent than ever in those religious meetings, which were held with great secrecy; and wherein Fenelon, after having dined with madame de Maintenon, pronounced a regular exhortation. The priests, either through jealousy or hatred, or that they were alarmed at the progress of Quietism, although no person had as yet preached that doctrine, took umbrage at assemblies to which they were not admitted. Sometimes madame Guion

preached

preached there: she used to require her hearers to give her an account of their most secret thoughts. The dutchess de Guiche happening to burst into a laugh, at a very pathetick part of her sermon, madame Guion insisted upon her declaring aloud the cause of her inattention. The dutchess, after some little endeavours to get off, said, ' Since you will know, I thought, at that moment, that you was a fool, and we, your hearers, not much wiser.

The archbishop of Paris, who resolved to ruin Fenelon, caused a case of conscience to be put to the Sorbonne. The question was, whether a prince ought to suffer a man who was suspected of Quietism, to be preceptor to his children? Monsieur Bossuet prevented the problem from being solved. Fenelon was now his friend; he had formerly been his parasite; at table, in the walks, in the circles, he offered the grossest incense to the haughty prelate. The bishop often blushed; the abbé praised his modesty: ' What a poisoner is this?' whispered la Bruyere*.

Mara's was intreated to represent to madame de Maintenon, that madame Guion threw St. Cyr into disorder; that she introduced a particular method there; and that the novices had more deference for the decisions of a woman, than for the orders of a bishop.

These complaints were partly true; madame Guion's writings were eagerly read at St. Cyr, and madame du Perou, then mistress of the novices, was almost the only one who had not a taste for the new spirituality; her pupils no longer obeyed her; they had extacies, illuminations, so ardent, and so inconvenient was their fondness for prayer, that every other duty was neglected. One, instead of sweeping the apartment, would rest supinely on her broom, lost in divine contemplation. Another, instead of instructing the young ladies, became inspired, and resigned herself up to the operation of the spirit. The under-mistress of the classes, stole away the enlightened from the

* Account of Quietism, by the abbé Philippeaux.

the rest, and led them into some private corner of the house, where they nourished themselves with the doctrine of madame Guion. Under pretence of aiming at perfection, they neglected the general rules which lead to it.

The bishop of Chartres, alarmed at the danger, made a visit to St. Cyr. He had a private conference with each of the ladies, and convinced them all that they were in error. Madame de la Maison-fort was the only one who rebelled against him; she found fault with some new regulations, and despised confessors. The bishops of Chartres required the community to deliver to him all madame Guion's books, whether in print or manuscript. Madame de Maintenon, who had doubtless concerted with him before this act of obedience, immediately took out of her pocket, a book of madame Guion's, entitled *The Short Way*: her example was followed by all the ladies, although with apparent regret.

Fenelon, who was confessor to madame de la Maison-fort, was apprehensive, that the indignation of the superiour and foundress, at the obstinacy of his penitent, would at length fall upon the head of the director, prevailed upon her to submit to her bishop; and made her resolve to take the solemn vows, for which she had shown so great an aversion. Madame Guion was intreated to forbear her visits to St. Cyr. Madame de Maintenon managed this affair with the greatest secrecy, for fear of alarming the king, who was extremely attentive to every thing that concerned this new establishment. All therefore was calm in appearance.

But, if the confessors of the community had murmured at madame Guion's visits, the ladies murmured no less at her absence: there was a necessity for allowing them to correspond with madame Guion, who wrote them very edifying letters, which all passed through the hands of madame de Maintenon, whose vigilance did not disdain the minutest cares. A copy of *The Short Way*, and another of *The Torrents*, had escaped the bishop's search: great numbers were multiplied from these. The community read these books at night, in the day they practised them; and
madame

madame Guion reigned at St. Cyr with more authority than the superiour of it.

However, the censures of her enemies increased every day. Unhappily the affair began to be debated warmly in the schools; and as if a dispute upon love must necessarily destroy friendship, Nicole and father Lami, intimately connected before, wrote against each other with all the malignity of enemies; as did afterwards Bossuet and Fenelon, who ceased to love each other, as soon as they discovered that they loved God in a different manner.

1684.] Madame de Maintenon consulted separately monsieur de Chalons, father Bourdaloue, Tiberge, Brisacier, Jolly and Tronçon, who all united to condemn in writing, *The Short Way* of madame Guion. Madame de Maintenon, always submissive to the voice of the pastors, uncertain what might be the consequences of those calumnies that were spread against madame Guion, persuaded her to lay the storm by a voluntary retreat.

Madame Guion retired, without regret, from a world which was not made for her, into a solitude unknown to all men, except Fouquet count de Vaux * her son-in-law, the duke de Chevreuse her friend, and Fenelon, her son in Jesus Christ. She now thought herself secure against injustice and oppression; but the theologians had entered into her affairs.

They accused her of spreading from her retreat the poison of Quietism. The confessors now talked of crimes which they accused her of committing, in consequence of her principles. They intercepted letters to her, in which her votaries told her, *that they were delivered up to all the furies, ever since they had been deprived of the reverend father Alleaume.*

These disorders, exaggerated with eager rage, were attributed to madame Guion, although they were, in reality, owing to certain monks, who, to seduce their penitents, explained physically these words of the Mysticks, which seem to make a being of man different

* Son of the last superintendant of the finances, and father of the marshal duke de Belle-Isle.

rent from man himself: *Provided that the superiour part belong to God, the soul cannot be sullied by the impurities of the inferiour part.*

It was now publickly said, that madame Guion should be confined; and that she corrupted all whom she approached. Her answer was, 'Those whom I have corrupted, thou knowest, oh my God, are full of love for thee.' 'When the women,' adds she, 'whom I have given to God, loved the elegancies of dress, were affected, vain, ostentatious, covered their cheeks with paint, and ruined their families, by their excessive pride and love of gaming; they were silent. All this they have now quitted; yet they cry, I have corrupted them. Ah, If I had made them quit piety for vice, what could they have said worse!'

The Jansenists had attempted to gain over madame Guion to their party; they were desirous of persuading the publick that they were persecuted, because they loved the Lord too much. All the Mysticks, all weak minds, and tender hearts were on their side; and probably they would have defended saint Theresa still better than Jansenius, whom they pretended to abandon; but madame Guion liked no notions but such as were her own; and even those she submitted to the judgment of the church.

Madame de Maintenon had not yet abandoned madame Guion; not that Fenelon's favourable opinion of her ballanced in her mind those of so many great divines, who had condemned her, but because she made a great difference between the heresy, which appeared to her to be justly censurable, and the person of the heretick, who seemed to merit compassion. However, to suppress these reports, which were industriously propagated, of her designing to be at the head of a kind of sect, which, at court, was called the *Rigorists*, she absolutely forbid madame Guion all correspondence with St. Cyr, and desired the bishop and the superior of that house to suppress there all the writings of that lady.

The

The bishop of Chartres thought Fenelon's writings as dangerous as those of madame Guion. Madame de la Maison-fort would not deliver them; madame de Maintenon obtained by persuasion what the bishop could not force by authority. One of the runs gave the bishop a bound manuscript, and intreated him to read some loose pages which were put into it. The prelate read them; and found things there which made madame de Maintenon tremble.

However, instead of depriving madame Guion of the protection of Beauvilliers, Colbert, and Chevreuse, she joined herself to them, to guard her from the unjust severity which her enemies were preparing for her, from a prince too much occupied, not to be sometimes deceived.

They drew up an apologetick memorial, which madame de Maintenon promised to support with her interest; but madame Guion disdained all justification, thanked her protectors, intreated them to withdraw the memorial, which was already given, and threw herself into the arms of *Love*. Her friends now took a resolution to be silent: a resolution so necessary at court; they admired, they pitied her, and suffered her to be oppressed.

Des Marais, who had been always an irreconcilable enemy to the Jansenists, prosecuted them rigorously in his diocese, where he tore up the last roots of the condemned doctrine. The Jansenists endeavoured to find him other employment, being convinced that his zeal, when once inflamed by other doctrines, would suffer them to breathe a few moments. They alarmed him with the new heresy spread by madame Guion; and succeeded so well in their design, that the bishop was now wholly employed in opposing, decrying, and subjecting madame Guion: a useful diversion to the party, especially by the defeat of the Jesuits.

Des Marais renewed his complaints against madame Guion, to madame de Maintenon. Fenelon endeavoured to remove her scruples. This opposition of opinions in two men, for whom she had an equal deference, threw her into a profound sadness. She
ballanced

ballanced between the bishop, whose austere piety dragged her towards him; and the abbé, whose gentle persuasion enslaved her. At length the zealot won her; and the archbishop of Paris threatening to renew his prosecution, Marais took advantage of this circumstance, to raise scruples in the mind of madame de Maintenon, who only sought to live in peace, well knowing the king's aversion for all novelties. This prince had never yet heard of the dispute, although it had its rise before his eyes, in the midst of his court, and divided the capital; the pulpits rang with it, and it drew the attention of all Europe. He only knew confusedly, that madame Guion had a very singular genius: so easy it is for those who are near kings to stifle the voice of the publick.

CHAPTER LX.

Commissioners granted to madame Guion.

MADAME de Maintenon still continued her friendship and protection to madame Guion, whose letters, manners, and conversation, removed her scruples concerning her doctrine; or at least obliged her to suspend her judgment. However, madame Guion imagined that she sought to ruin her; for no other reason, but because she had a few years before freed her from oppression. This notion will appear very strange; but it was madame Guion's*.

She demanded that commissioners might be appointed to examine her doctrine and manners; she could obtain them for her doctrine only. Madame de Maintenon believed, that if her principles were once known, all the calumnies that had been spread against her, would fall of themselves.

Aug. 1694.] The commission was appointed; it was formed of the bishop of Meaux, the bishop of Châlons, and monsieur Tronçon, superiour of St. Sulpice. Madame Guion was inconsolable when they refused to admit three laicks, whom she was desirous of associating with the three ecclesiasticks.

Her

* Life of madame Guion.

Her enemies were the bishop of Chartres, whose zeal was excessively alarmed, Hebert rector of Versailles, who had at first approved of her books *, and afterwards exclaimed against them through resentment, that the countess de Guiche and the dutchess de Mortemar had chose another confessor. The abbé Boileau, who had been gained by sister Rose, a young woman who joined all the extravagance of a devotee, to all the Libertinism of a prostitute. Fléchier, who only sought a dispute, to increase his reputation; and who disputed with the greatest number, that he might have a better bishoprick. The bishop of Meaux, who had long considered *pure love* as a chimera, and, lately, Fenelon, as his rival. The abbé de Rancé, who prohibited all studies, and engaged in every dispute, who exclaimed against Quietism, and established a rule the most likely to propagate it; in a word, all the ecclesiasticks of Paris, whom gratitude or interest attached to the archbishop. ‘How,’ cried madame Guion, ‘shall I be able to defend myself against all these?’ However, she had some dependence upon monsieur de Châlon, who was of a mild conciliating temper, and monsieur Tronçon, who, except steadiness, had every virtue.’

The bishop of Meaux set out for his diocese, where he examined madame Guion’s papers. He was shocked at these presumptuous pretensions to divine grace, offended at the vanity which shewed itself in every page, and enraged at a dream, in which madame Guion was transported by Jesus Christ to a chamber, where there were two beds. ‘For whom are these two beds,’ asked madame Guion. ‘One,’ replied Jesus Christ, ‘is for my mother; and the other is for you, my dear wife.’

When the conferences at Issy were begun, the archbishop of Paris complained loudly, that they incroached upon his right, by taking from him the cognizance of a heresy which arose in his diocese; and in revenge precipitated a publick censure upon the writings still under their examination. This act of authority was
not

* Memoirs of madame Guion. Hebert does not mention it in his own.

not well received, 'Is it for him,' said they, 'to judge of mystical tenets? Has he ever read a book of devotion? Has he prayed enough to God to judge of the efficacy of prayer? How should an epicurean have a taste for piety? It is not possible to love madame Guion, and the dutchess de Lesdiguières at the same time*.'

Harlai demanded an audience of the king, and told him that the bishops of Meaux and Châlons held private conferences at Issy. 'I know it,' replied the king. 'These meetings,' said the archbishop, 'may conceal a dangerous plot against the government. I know those prelates well,' answered the king. 'They are examining the doctrine of madame Guion,' resumed the archbishop. 'These doctrines were propagated in my diocese: it belongs to me to pronounce sentence, and I have done it.' 'Theirs,' replied the king, 'will be still better,' Bossuet was informed of this conversation by madame de Maintenon. To pacify his metropolitan, and to leave him no pretence for complaint, he went to visit him, applauded the censure he had pronounced, and promised him that at Issy they would condemn the same errors†, and upon the same principles. Churchmen, in their management of holy affairs, act too much in the spirit of the world.

CHAPTER LXI.

The Conferences at Issy.

Bossuet assumed the direction of these conferences, he held to one fixed point; he maintained it with obstinacy. He took possession of all the papers; he excluded the duke de Chevreuse from the assembly, under pretence that they were examining an ecclesiastical affair, and treated madame Guion not with the charity of a bishop, but the cruelty of a tyrant.

He

* Paula de Gondy, married March 12. 1675. to Francis Emmanuel de Créquy, duke de Lesdiguières.

† An account of quietism, by Philippeaux.

He had not promised madame de Maintenon a formal condemnation, as madame Guion supposed, but he had promised it to the archbishop of Paris, and he had resolved upon it himself. He concealed his design from the abbé Fenelon, who, to make it more difficult to condemn the doctrines of his friend, furnished her with extracts from mystical writings, which were a sufficient answer to all that her adversaries could object.

Bossuet discovered *the pride of the devil*, where Fenelon only saw the most christian humility. The former suspected all, the latter gave every thing a favourable turn. Bossuet always insolent, when he had gentle spirits to deal with, and meanly submissive with haughty opposers, had fair play for his malignity with Fenelon and his friend. Madame Guion was not able to answer a man, who tyrannized over his associates, who spoke with great warmth, who was ever ready to interrupt, yet could not bear to be interrupted, who embarrassed her, understood her not, yet protested that he understood her perfectly well, and was always endeavouring to silence her.

Bossuet informed madame de Maintenon, that madame Guion had relinquished her errors. He had, indeed by the force of importunity, obtained a promise of her, that she would reside some months in the community of the sisters of Saint-Mary of Meaux. The prelate did not confine his triumph to this concession; he expected from it the see of Paris, and the cardinal's purple, each of which he missed, although very worthy of both.

While the conferences continued, Fenelon wrote several letters to Bossuet, full of mystical principles, and the deepest submission. By these letters, his heart seemed to be divided between disinterested love, and blind faith: he protested that he looked upon him as the faithful depository of the tradition of the church; and that his conscience was directed by his: in a word, promises of obedience and docility were carried to an excess, which would be scarce excusable in the most

unin-

unplighted christian ; for it is certain that Bossuet was not a council.

The examination at Issy had produced so few heresies, that a mandate could not be justified ; therefore Bossuet artfully prevailed upon madame Guion to sign a certain paper which he thought would answer his purpose. However, this was not sufficient ; he in vain endeavoured to force her to sign another, wherein, by a very remote and unperceived consequence, she was made not believe in the incarnate word.

The nuns of Méaux, who were witnesses of these violent proceedings, detested the treachery of their bishop, and admired the resolution of their prisoner.* Bossuet in vain exclaimed against her obstinacy. Madame Guion replied, ‘ Is it then a heretick, whom you have admitted to your holy mysteries ? ’ He railed at her defender. Fenelon calmly answered, ‘ if I have been deceived, I am not the only one who was so.’

Mean time Fenelon’s favour with madame de Maintenon decreased every day, unperceived by himself. Madame Guion, from the midst of her retreat, guessed it, warned him of it, and was not believed. Madame de Maintenon had asked for the abbey of Saint-Vallery for him, either as a reward for the care he had taken of the duke of Burgundy’s education, or to secure to him an asylum against the storm which she seemed to foresee. Fenelon, to escape it, signed the thirty four articles of Issy, but only through respect to the commissioners ; for he would not allow that he was convinced. ‘ He will be soon a friend to the Jesuits,’ said the abbé Beaufort.

The condemnation of madame Guion’s writings, which Fenelon had so warmly defended, was not the first cause of that disgust which madame de Maintenon seemed to have to him. The king did not like him ; Lewis often entertained unjust aversions, and madame de

* Life of madame Guion written by herself. I do not pretend to answer for the truth of this fact ; I quote my author, and this author is suspected.

de Maintenon had no will but his. Fenelon being with her one day in her closet, at the hour that Lewis generally used to visit her, he intreated her to make him known to the king; accordingly madame de Maintenon detained him when he offered to retire. Fenelon talked well, although he talked a great deal; but to shine before Lewis was not the way to please him. He loved wit; but could not endure that ostentatious display of it, so humiliating to those who have it not, and so impatiently suffered by those who have. The king, tired with the fine-turned periods of Fenelon, said to madame de Maintenon, as soon as he was gone, 'Your man speaks well, madam, but I own to you freely he will never be mine.'

A second conversation which Fenelon had with the king entirely excluded him from his favour. Always solicitous for the publick good, his imagination was fraught with ideas that tended to secure it. He suffered the king to perceive those austere principles of government, with which he inspired the duke of Burgundy. Lewis, whom nothing had prepared for principles so true, yet so little known, considered them as chimeras; and when Fenelon was gone out of his presence, he told some of the courtiers, that he had just been conversing with the sprightliest, and most chimerical genius in his kingdom. The duke of Burgundy was informed of what the king had said; he repeated it to his preceptor, who resolved, that for the future he would banish wit, when he was with the king.

By degrees madame de Maintenon became less dazzled with the fine and ever fruitful imagination of her director: perhaps she saw him too often not to be sometimes disgusted with that brilliancy of wit which he took such pains to display. She gave all her confidence to the bishop of Chartres, who conducted her to God with more firmness, and less politeness than the abbé Gobelin, with more wisdom, and less gentleness than Fenelon.

CHAPTER LXII.

Fenelon made archbishop of Cambray.

THE friends of Fenelon thought him in a dangerous situation; his favour was declining and his principles were attacked; they resolved to procure the archbishoprick of Cambray for him; and the duke de Beauvilliers was the first who proposed it to the king. Madame de Maintenon supported his request by the advice of Marais, who had too much judgment not to be sensible of the merit of his old friend, and too much greatness of mind to be capable of envying it.

While Fenelon's friends were employed in soliciting the see of Cambray for him, he was suspected of secretly aspiring to that of Paris. He represented to madame de Maintenon, that the diocese of Paris had occasion for a man who would restore strict discipline. He artfully excluded Bossuet by insinuating, that if he was made archbishop of Paris, either the church would suffer by his quitting his studies, or the diocese by his continuing them. He excluded cardinal Janson by exaggerating the services he was capable of doing the king at Rome. Monsieur de Noailles he assured her was too regular and too fond of ease to consent to be transferred to Paris: he who had refused to succeed a bishop of Cahors, who knew not how to spell his own name.

The king himself acquainted Fenelon, that he was nominated to the archbishoprick of Cambray. Fenelon replied, that a dignity which removed him from the duke of Burgundy, he could never consider as a reward. 'It is not my design,' resumed the king, 'to oblige you to a residence; I know too well how necessary you are to my grand children.' 'The care of

* Account of Quietism, by the abbé Philippeaux.

‘ of the princes education, and the archbishoprick of
 ‘ Cambray,’ answered Fenelon, ‘ are compliments
 ‘ incompatible with each other. The council of Trent
 ‘ permits the bishop to be only three months absent
 ‘ upon his own affairs, and three for the affairs of the
 ‘ diocese.’ ‘ The council of Trent,’ resumed Lewis,
 ‘ did not foresee how necessary you would be to the
 ‘ church and the state, and how well qualified to serve
 ‘ them both.’ Fenelon intreated the king to give him
 some time to consult his friends, before he accepted
 the honour he offered him.

A few days afterwards the king took him into his
 closet, and said to him, ‘ The interests of my king-
 dom, with the duties of your conscience, may be re-
 conciled. You shall reside in your diocese, and you
 shall give us the two or three months which the ca-
 nons allow you every year for your own private af-
 fairs.’

Fenelon, when he accepted this dignity, resigned to
 the king the only abbey he possessed, which was that
 of Saint Vallery. This act of disinterestedness was by
 some attributed to a direct order from the king, by
 others to the necessity he was under of propping a fal-
 ling reputation : all imputed it to selfish motives, ra-
 ther than to a principle of justice.

The archbishop of Rheims, who dreaded the con-
 sequence of so dangerous an example, said abruptly to
 Fenelon, ‘ It is reported, that you will resign your be-
 nefice : what madness !’ ‘ If it be madness,’ repli-
 ed Fenelon, ‘ it is already done.’ ‘ You injure us all
 ‘ by it,’ resumed the archbishop, ‘ what opinion do
 ‘ you wish the king to have of the bishop of Meaux,
 ‘ who has several abbeys ; of monsieur de Rheims,
 ‘ who desires more ; of so many prelates, who think
 ‘ their bishopricks give them a claim to abbeys ; of so
 ‘ many who solicit for them ; and many more who are
 ‘ never to be satisfied ?’ ‘ I blame no body,’ replied
 Fenelon. ‘ You mean,’ returned the archbishop,
 ‘ every one ought to follow the dictates of his con-
 science’

science; well, my conscience commands me to keep my abbey.

The bishop of Chartres and the bishop of Meaux disputed for the honour of consecrating Fenelon. Monsieur de Meaux claimed it as being the diocesan bishop. Monsieur de Chartres pleaded the rights of friendship. Marais, at Fenelon's intreaty, resigned the ceremony to Bossuet; but resolved not to be present, since he could not perform it.

Madame de Maintenon desired, that the archbishop of Cambray might be consecrated at Saint-Cyr; and that the three Children of France might be present. Fenelon knew that his principles were suspected: he was apprehensive that his elevation would expose him to envy, and raise him new enemies; that his sentiments concerning a disinterested love of God, and the mercenary hope of reward, were too well liked, and too much followed to be forgiven him. He went to visit Bossuet; he tried every method to soften him, and to recover his friendship. He kneeled, he called him father, master, friend, and protested that he would never preach any other doctrine but his. Bossuet, overcome by this submission, gave him back all his writings in favour of Quietism. Fenelon intreated him to keep some to serve as testimonies against him, if ever he varied from the true doctrine. 'No, monsieur,' said Bossuet, 'I desire no other security but your word.'

CHAPTER LXIII.

Fenelon opposed to Bossuet.

THE doctrine of the two prelates was soon found to be very opposite; and occasioned great confusion. The Quietists, who only preached up the tranquillity of the soul and entire self-renunciation, were treated by all as the disturbers of the public peace.

O 2

Madame

* Madame de Coulange's letters. Memoirs of the bishop of Agen.

Madame de Guion was employed in defending herself against the accusations of Bossuet; she had only a superficial knowledge of the monkish writers, and therefore intreated Fenelon to furnish her with proper extracts from them. Fenelon undertook this task; but performed it with great caution, lest he should give any wound to the sentiments of the true mysticks, which he thought he understood much better than the bishop of Meaux.

At length madame Guion's vindication appeared. In manuscript it had excited Bossuet's compassion; printed, it embarrassed him greatly. Nothing can be stronger than this apology: the author indeed no otherwise proves that her pious dreams are good, than by quoting other dreams of the same kind; but the dreamers the quotes had been canonized, beatified, invoked, or were soon to be so.

Bossuet, who was always inclined towards ecclesiastical tyranny, jealous, perhaps, of his disciple's reputation, and of his own influence and power most certainly tenacious, required Fenelon to condemn the doctrine of his friend, telling him that it would be more honourable for him to decide as a judge, than to be condemned as an accomplice. The writing was drawn up, and shewn to madame de Maintenon, who approved of it. Fenelon proposed modifications, Bossuet made promises: each complained that the other had failed in his part.

The bishop of Meaux was not discouraged by this obstinate resistance; he sent the archbishop of Cambray his pastoral letter upon the books examined at Issy, and required him to sign it. Fenelon, then preparing to go to his diocese, looked over the margins hastily; the letter appeared to him to be a libel against madame Guion: he was enraged at it, and refused his signature.

This refusal irritated Bossuet. What, said he to the duke de Chevreuse, who came to return him the paper unsigned, will he abandon three bishops, to support and defend a woman! the bare suspicion of this would disgrace him at court; what would the certainty do? and to what kind of books is it that

‘ he is resolved to be the martyr ?’ In vain Bossuet exclaimed : Fenelon was obstinate, and the duke de Chevreuse gave him back his pastoral letter.

Compassion, perhaps, had pleaded with Fenelon in behalf of his oppressed friend ; perhaps he thought that absolute submission promised by the abbé of Saint-Vallery, was become meanness in the archbishop of Cambray, who had his share also of the infallibility of the church ; and it is not impossible but he yielded too easily to the insinuations of vanity, which persuaded him, that in an exalted station humility was meanness.

Bossuet now turned all his rage upon madame Guion ; he exacted a blind submission of her, and obtained only a positive denial. The bishop, who could not dispense with disobedience, had recourse to those acts of authority and violence which had converted more Huguenots than even his preaching had done. Madame Guion, terrified at the prelate’s threatening her with a letter de cachet, in order to prove her a heretic, signed all they desired.*

Madame de Maintenon, who had been assured by Marais and Bossuet, that Fenelon would be prevailed upon to sign the pastoral letter, was shocked at his refusal, and expressed her dissatisfaction. Fenelon justified himself ; he said, that he had promised to condemn madame Guion’s errors, but not her person ; that he had performed his promise ; that the dignity of his office would not permit him to make a scandalous entry into his diocese, by complying with what the bishop of Meaux had required. ‘ I have,’ said he to madame de Maintenon, ‘ publicly shewn, that I
‘ esteemed madame Guion, and I am now urged to
‘ calumniate her. Nothing has been proved against
‘ her ; and I am required to accuse her to the church,
‘ as guilty of crimes deserving the flames. I have ex-
‘ plained her expressions which are obscure, by her
‘ sentiments which I have carefully examined ; and it
‘ is expected, that I should condemn her sentiments,
‘ on account of her expressions. To you, madame,

- I have sacrificed my opinion ; I will sacrifice my
- friend to no person whatever. I have signed the
- thirty-four articles of Issy ; but my name shall never
- be seen below a libel.

Bossuet, now more violently enraged, made madame Guion suffer for the firmness of her friend ; he accused her of dogmatizing, after she had promised to be silent, and of remaining concealed at Paris, notwithstanding she had declared she would go to drink the waters of Bourbon. He artfully procured one of those particular orders, which a prince, who is well informed of all affairs, never grants without difficulty, and which the boldest minister never countersigns without fear.

In consequence of this order madame Guion was arrested, and carried to the house of the governor of Vincennes. The king could not resolve to give a more rigorous order. Madame de Maintenon, who loved the accused devotee, and hated violence, had solicited the king in her favour. Madame Guion was not likely to trouble the state : it is not devout contemplatists who occasion revolutions. It would however have been sufficient to have confined her in a convent ; but such moderation did not agree with the scheme that was formed to ruin the archbishop of Cambray ; and Lewis was weak enough to order her to be shut up in the tower of Vincennes. This rigour made madame Guion appear more guilty, and Fenelon's principles more doubtful.

Fenelon revenged himself nobly on his enemies, by the virtues he displayed in his diocese. The Flemings, who had never had an archbishop that would deign to preach the word of God to them, were surprized, delighted, edified, to see their new prelate descend every day from his episcopal chair, fatigued with apostolick zeal, teaching children the first elements of religion, leaving to his vicars the easy duties, and reserving the most laborious to himself, keeping an almoner to distribute his revenues among the poor, and not to mutter over mass for him. In a word, to find that he always remembered that he was their pastor, and sought to make

make them forget he was not their countryman. *

From Cambray, he regulated the princes education with the same authority as he did while he was at Versailles ; the progress they made in their studies seemed to render his presence useless, though his conversation was necessary to make those studies delightful to them.

Mean time the bishop of Chartres incessantly employed all his cares to remove from madame de Maintenon whatever had a tincture of Quietism. Her confessors had always been her council ; and they, instead of disengaging her from affairs of state, persuaded her to attempt to govern, that they might govern under the shadow of her name, either because they were solicitous to countermine some powerful intrigues, or that they did not think it beneath the majesty of religion to be protected by a woman, to whom they attributed the abilities and the virtues of a great man. A brief, by which the pope put the holy-see under her protection, authorized her to enter into the affairs of the church, which she sometimes did as a witness, never as an arbitrator, and always contrary to her inclination.

CHAPTER LXIV.

The death of the archbishop of Paris.

1695.] **H**ARLAI, archbishop of Paris, finished an impure life by a scandalous death. He had for two years been in disgrace at court, but accustomed to support himself with the royal authority in the assemblies of the clergy, he was willing to preserve some remains of respect and consideration, by declaring again that he was invested with it. The bishop of Orleans courageously accused him of falsehood ; and told him, that he imposed upon that august assembly. The king, when he was informed of what had passed, sent the archbishop orders to retract publicly what he had said, and forbid him for the future, to make use of his name.

Harlai was overwhelmed with this stroke ; he departed from Conflans, shut himself up in his closet, and forbid, as usual, any of his domesticks to interrupt

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him :

* Memoirs of the bishop of Agen.

him: a precaution which was attributed to his fears of their perceiving that he was afflicted with the falling-sickness. There, with great anguish of mind, he took a review of all the mortifications he had suffered, and the many crimes he had committed. His servants, surprised that they were not called, entered his apartment, and found their master in an apoplectick fit, struggling with death. They flew to Paris to get proper assistance; the dutchess de Lesdiguières arrived in haste, but the curate of the parish was not sent for. The archbishop, without shewing any signs of repentance, died in the arms of his mistress, who was soon comforted for his loss by a new lover*.

The king was at Marly when he was informed of Harlai's death. 'Let me not be solicited for this post,' said he, 'I will bestow it upon merit only.' The archbishop of Rheims, treated with great severity, the memory of a man whose faults he should not have mentioned, because he had always been his enemy. The king heard of it, and was extremely offended. The count de Grammont said to the archbishop, 'Monsieur de Rheims, it is a great happiness to be alive.'

No sacred orator would pronounce Harlai's funeral oration: this general refusal was a remainder of ancient probity. Father Gaillard preached a sermon upon the uncertainty of life, but said not a word of the deceased prelate.

The publick named the archbishop of Cambray for the see of Paris; madame de Maintenon asked Hebert, the curate of Versailles, what were people's opinions concerning it. 'Many persons think,' replied Hebert, 'that, if monsieur de Fenelon had not been so lately promoted, the choice would have fallen upon him; and they desire it so earnestly, that they would have this first instance of the king's favour, only the forerunner of a greater.'

'You know,' interrupted madame de Maintenon, 'the reason which hinders us from proposing monsieur de Fenelon; but we have still the bishops of Meaux
' and

* Memoirs of the bishop of Agen.

‘ and Châlons ; which of the two would you name for the archbishoprick of Paris ? ’ ‘ Him who should refuse it,’ replied Hebert, ‘ and certainly monsieur de Châlons will not accept of it.’

Lewis-Antony de Noailles had been raised to the ecclesiastical dignities, without the interposition of the Jesuits, upon whom they depended at that time. His doctrine was not suspected ; and his piety was so eminent, that the dutchess de Noailles, who died with the reputation of a saint, had no other confessor than her son. Madame de Maintenon proposed this prelate for the vacant see of Paris ; and the next day the king desired the marshal de Noailles to write to his brother, to come instantly to court. The bishop of Châlons excused himself on account of the duties of his station. The king dispatched a courier to him ; and madame de Maintenon wrote him a very pressing letter. The prelate came to Versailles ; and the king immediately offered him the vacant see. The bishop represented to his majesty, that he was very happy at Châlons ; that he did some good there which probably he should not be able to do at Paris, where he would meet with continual opposition ; that he should have for enemies the Jesuits, whose resentments he would not enter into ; the Jansenists, whose opinions he should always oppose ; the Quietists, against whom he had already declared ; all the ecclesiasticks, whom habit and the example of Harlai had hardened in ignorance and vice ; and the whole court, which would not tamely suffer that corruption of manners which now prevailed, should be repressed by church discipline. ‘ These are powerful enemies,’ said the king to him, ‘ but you may depend upon all my authority.’

Noailles accepted the archbishoprick upon this promise. The Jesuits were busy in determining their choice of the person whom they should propose to the king for the see of Paris, and it was already filled, Father de la Chaise knew it no sooner than the publick ; and never pardoned either Noailles or madame de Maintenon for this supposed injury. The king said to his courtiers, ‘ If I had known a man more worthy of

‘ this see than the bishop of Châlons, he should not have had it.’

The new archbishop shewed less solicitude for his own preferment, than for that of his family. He made use of an expression like the king’s, to procure for his brother the abbé de Noailles the bishoprick of Châlons, which he had just quitted. ‘ Sire,’ said he to the king, ‘ if I knew one more proper for it, I would propose him to your majesty.’ The abbé de Noailles was not yet arrived to the age required by the canons; but great piety and a premature knowledge, dispensed with it.

CHAPTER LXV.

The explication of the Maxims of the saints.

1696.] **W**HILE madame Guion espoused Jesus Christ at Vincennes in one of her extacies, sung her loves, sighed out her misfortunes, made parodies on the works of Quinault, endeavoured to have as many visions as Maria d’Agréda, who had been lately canonized at Rome, and only answered her judges with these words, *God has favoured me so far as to overshadow me by father la Combe*, who likewise answered to his judges, *I have overshadowed madame Guion in our Lord*; Fenelon at Cambray was employed in defending her, in defending himself, in proving the orthodoxy of the Mysticks; and Bossuet declaimed at Saint-Cyr against Quietism, in conferences wherein the ladies proposed to him their doubts, which he solved with the most convincing eloquence.

Madame de la Maison-fort, the wit of the community, was not convinced by the first discourses of the bishop of Meaux; she put her difficulties in writing, these papers are still extant. In them may be seen a train of ideas and sentiments, a fund of erudition and sagacity, which would have seemed astonishing in a man. The bishop answered her. Madame de la Maison-fort appeared satisfied; but a secret inclination always drew her towards the archbishop of Cambray.

Bossuet

Bossuet was soon ashamed of having employed against madame Guion those rigorous methods by which no one was ever really converted. Noailles caused the prisoner to be removed from the castle of Vincennes to a convent at Vaugirard. This prelate, who always remembered, that the only punishment proper to be inflicted on any person wandering in error, is to be directed to the right way, brought her back by his instructions to ideas more holy and more pure ; and obtained without any constraint, a disavowal of all her errors.

Fenelon's book at length appeared, under the title of *An Explanation of the Maxims of the Saints*. The style of it was pure and elegant, the principles artfully shewn, the contradictions reconciled with great address. The author appeared to be equally apprehensive of being accused of adopting the Principles of Molinos, and of abandoning those of saint Theresa ; sometimes attributing too much to charity, sometimes giving too little to hope. Among his propositions, one establishes the reality of a state in which God is beloved here on earth merely for his own sake. Others, that a soul, oppressed with doubt and anxiety, might in those agonizing moments which the Mysticks call the last trials, make an absolute sacrifice of paradise and its salvation to God. In general, the book might be defended ; but it would have been more prudent to have burned it. Fenelon read his work to the archbishop of Paris, who advised him to suppress it ; to the abbé Pirot, chancellor of the church of Paris, and doctor of the Sorbonne, who earnestly recommended it to him to give it to the world, and told Hébert, *that it was a book of gold* ; to the Jesuits of the college of Clermont, who promised to support it ; and to the abbé Fleuri, who thought, that what he did not understand of it was as beautiful as that which he did.

When Bossuet heard of it, he exclaimed with his accustomed vehemence, ' Well, let him write, let his book appear before mine ; but let him take care, for if he goes aside from the truth, he shall find me tracing his steps to bring him back to it. I will raise my voice ; and, if there is a necessity for it, I will carry my complaints to Rome.'

Ap-

Apparently he took this Resolution, in order to reconcile himself with Rome ; for he had been one of the most zealous Gallicans of the assembly of the clergy in the year 1682.

The Quietists conceived great hopes from this book ; they spread about a print to declare, that a prophecy of madame Guion's was accomplished. She had predicted, that prayer would revive under a child, by whom she meant the duke of Burgundy. This picture, proposed by Fenelon, designed by Silvestre, and engraved by le Clerc, represented the duke of Burgundy, in the habit of a shepherd, with a crook in his hand, in the midst of a great number of animals of every species, with these words of the eleventh chapter of Isaiah, *Puer parvulus illuminabit eos*.

The duke of Anjou was in a corner, represented like a naked child drawing a serpent out of its hole ; and the duke of Berry, still at the breast, in the arms of his nurse, and playing with an asp, which he had in his hand. Madame Guion was doubtless meant by the nurse. By these emblems they designed to represent all ages, all ranks, and every passion, calmed and subdued by that spirit of prayer which the prophets had introduced.

Feb. 1697.] Fenelon being at Cambray, when his book was published, the duke de Beauvilliers, who had caused it to be printed, presented a copy of it to the king, who was at Marly, and sent one to Bossuet. Pontchartrain, then comptroller general, and afterwards chancellor, decried the book to the king, and told him, that none but knaves and dupes approved of it. Maurice le Tellier, archbishop of Rheims, treated it no less severely in a letter he wrote to his majesty. The king, who did not think a minister of state, and a Jansenist bishop were proper judges of a theological book, sent for Bossuet, who assured him, that the bishop and the minister were but too much in the right. The king reproached him with his silence upon an affair of such consequence, with his connexions with Fenelon, and his extreme solicitude to consecrate him archbishop of Cambray. Bossuet threw himself at the king's feet, wept,

wept, groaned, and implored his forgiveness, for not having revealed to him the fanaticism of his brother. 'I charge your conscience,' said the king to him, 'with all the misfortunes which I foresee. God is my witness that the least suspicion against Fenelon would have excluded him for ever from the ecclesiastical dignities.'

This prince, who had so eagerly prosecuted Quietism in Italy, thought it a much greater evil than it really was, and saw with indignation the heresy steal into his court, and even approach his throne. He hated all sectaries; he was apprehensive of the least innovation in religion; he had destroyed the Huguenots, and prosecuted the Jansenists, at the hazard of making his kingdom one continued waste; and he was now informed, that the faith of his family and his heirs were in danger.

He severely reproached madame de Maintenon for having concealed the friendship between Fenelon and madame Guion; for her solicitude to procure him the archbishoprick of Cambray; and the private conferences she had had with him. In vain she represented to him, that the suspicions which had been conceived against monsieur de Fenelon, had given way to the hopes which he had given of his readiness to renounce his errors; that at the examination at Issy, he shewed the most perfect submission; and, that some regard ought to be paid to a man so estimable for his piety, and so distinguished for his understanding. The king rejected all these excuses, and appeared to be so highly offended, that madame de Maintenon would have thought herself ruined, if that had been possible.

Father de la Chaise was consulted: he replied, that the book of *Maxims* was an excellent book; that the Catholics were greatly edified by it; and that only Jansenists could disapprove of it.

Father Seignery was the first who had depressed Quietism in Italy, and father de la Chaise had revived it in France. However, the whole society did not engage in this dispute, which proves, that the king's confessor is not always its organ. The society has its interests

terests to pursue, the confessor may have passions to gratify. Father de la Rue preached against disinterested love, and father Bourdaloue candidly owned to madame de Maintenon, that the archbishop's book was not exact; and that being written in the vulgar tongue, it might be dangerous. This frankness embroiled him with father de la Chaise; but Bourdaloue was firm to truth.

The king, alarmed by Bossuet, pacified by his confessor, suspended his judgment of the book; but remembered that Fenelon made politick romances, and was afraid that he should make a religious one likewise, especially since he found that the women were extremely fond of a new book, which was already styled *The bible of the little church*.

CHAPTER LXVI.

Proposals for an accommodation.

Fenelon, when he returned to Paris, listened only to the clamours of those who envied him, was unmoved with the applauses of his friends, proposed means to stop the scandal his book had given, offered to retouch it, to explain what was obscure in it, and to suppress all that seemed dangerous. He waited upon madame de Maintenon, whom he found employed in reading his book. 'Here,' said she to him, 'is a chapter, which I have read nine times, and cannot yet comprehend.' It was the chapter upon the marriage of the soul, with which the courtiers were greatly diverted.

'Madam,' replied the archbishop, 'you may read it a hundred times, and it will still appear incomprehensible to you. The books of the Mysticks are obscure, and it is not at court where you are to learn to understand them.' 'It is doubtless from thence,' said madame de Maintenon, 'that so many shocking clamours proceed against your book. When I think it is you who wrote it, my apprehensions cease.'

Eight

Eight days after this interview, madame de Maintenon spoke to him again concerning the new clamours his book had excited, and expressed great grief for them. 'But, monsieur,' added she, 'you are too prudent, not to have consulted wise and learned friends upon your work, and too docile not to have been regulated by their opinions.' 'Yes, madam,' replied the bishop of Cambray, 'I shewed my work to the cardinal de Noailles, who read and examined it, and whatever he objected to I have suppressed: I shewed it to messieurs Tronçon, Fleuri, and Hébert, who approved it. The bishop of Meaux condemns it, because it has appeared before his book, through the sollicitude of my friends, who had the care of printing it during my absence, and were afraid that the bishop of Meaux, being offended at my not having submitted the manuscript to his examination, would suppress it by authority.'

Madame de Maintenon proposed conferences; Cardinal de Noailles, who was always a friend to peace, earnestly desired them. Fenelon consented, provided the bishop of Meaux was excluded from them. He entertained a strong resentment for the invectives this prelate had thrown out against his book; for the name of heretick which he had given him; for the severity with which he had mentioned his book to the king at Marly; and particularly for some words that had escaped him in the hearing of all the courtiers. 'The bishop of Cambray,' said he, 'has often told me, that, in the interior practice upon contrition, he was as much to be blamed as the Molinists.'

Hebert, who was always a spy for his friends, repeated to Fenelon what Bossuet had said. Fenelon, the mildest, the most moderate of men, made efforts to conceal his indignation from Hebert which he perceived; however, he could not help saying*, 'If monsieur Bossuet said those words, monsieur Bossuet is a most dishonest man. I have never, but in confession, mentioned to him the movements of my soul; and

* Manuscript Memoirs of the bishop of Agen.

‘ and if he knows them, he could know them only by that means.’ The bishop of Meaux printed afterwards what he had thus publicly declared. The bishop of Cambray, in his answer, told him it was an unprecedented thing to abuse the sacred secrecy of confession: nothing in this dispute caused more scandal.

Mean time the bishop of Meaux told the king, that Fenelon, by his obstinacy in rejecting the proposed conferences, would himself condemn his book. Madame de Maintenon, who was often told by her friend, that he only wanted a private conversation with the king to undeceive him intirely, procured him an audience. Fenelon told the king, that he had only explained the maxims of the saints, which he had particularly studied; and that if any improper expressions had escaped him, they should be suppressed in the next edition. The king, after this conversation, was more incensed against the accused prelate than before, either because the presence of a man, who was now odious to him, awakened all his anger, or because his suspicions were strengthened by those very arguments which he had made use of to remove them. He shewed great resentment against madame de Maintenon, reproached her again with the secret conferences, accused cardinal de Noailles of weakness, and told Marais that he had expected more from his known zeal. They represented to him, that Fenelon was not yet condemned, and promised him that the affair should be terminated by gentle methods. The archbishop proposed more ample explications; madame de Maintenon mentioned this scheme to the king, who approved of it. Bossuet, enraged that his prey should be thus snatched from him, declared that explications were artful evasions, insisted upon a formal recantation, produced a long list of divines, who disapproved of the book, and raised the king’s resentment against madame de Maintenon, father de la Chaise, and the whole court.

The publick, not being able to judge of the dispute, reasoned upon the disputants. They endeavoured to discover

discover the cause of Bossuet's animosity, and Fenelon's obstinacy; zeal for religion, said they, inspires charity not rage; the bishop of Cambray's great reputation gives umbrage to the bishop of Meaux. He thinks the praises which are bestowed on others injurious to his fame; he will not believe that the tradition of the church, concerning an article of such importance, could escape him. He has always loved the court better than his diocese; he has ambition; he has lost the place of first almoner to the dauphiness; he wants to recover it in the household of the dutchess of Burgundy, and to exclude Fenelon, who has a better claim to it than himself. Others said, that before his dispute with Fenelon, he was sure of the place; that his superiority was too generally acknowledged to suffer him to be suspected of jealousy, as if a superiour or an equal could only excite it; that his zeal, which was perhaps too vehement, proceeded from his adherence to truth, which made him forget what he owed to friendship, to fulfil the duties of his function; that, as guardian of the doctrine contained in the articles of Issy, he was justly enraged against Fenelon, who, after having signed those articles, condemned them by a book which made a schism in the church.

CHAPTER LXVII.

Fenelon submits his book to the judgment of Rome.

Fenelon defended the book which he was not allowed to explain, and was answered by Bossuet. One had on his side the court and the college of Clermont, the other, the Jansenists and the city. Here the bishop of Meaux's Pastoral instruction was looked upon as a complete refutation of the book of *Maxims*. There, they maintained that it was an apology for it: but why all this animosity, this fervour of opposition, they cried; these two bishops maintain the same doctrine, they differ only in their expressions; are mere words of consequence enough to give occasion for such scandalous scenes? By wise and disinterested persons Fenelon was
blamed

blamed for having wrote the book, and Bossuet for having condemned it.

Madame de Maintenon continued neutral in this affair: esteem, friendship, compassion, bound her to Fenelon; but these sentiments were less forceable than a secret regret which she felt, yet possibly concealed even from herself, for having so long confided the care of her conscience to a man accused of a monstrous heresy. The bishop of Meaux endeavoured to animate her against Fenelon, a powerful inclination still drew her towards him; the bishop of Chartres, who directed her conscience, filled her with scruples. In this perplexed state of mind she desired to see the heretick again, and to confront him with cardinal de Noailles. The cardinal owned that he had examined the book, but denied that he had approved of it. This conversation increased her doubts and her uneasiness. 'Dissipate, gentlemen,' said she to them; 'and if possible let each prove himself in the right.' If she had been a Quietist, would Quietism have been an error?

Fenelon flattered himself that he should find powerful protectors at Rome, where he knew his adversaries had no influence. He was advised by all his friends to carry his cause there, upon the first instance that should be made for that purpose. Father de la Chaise wrote in the king's name to cardinal de Janson, and entreated him to protect *the Maxims of the Saints*, the doctrine of which must necessarily be pure, since, it was opposed by all the Jansenists. The cardinal assured the king in his answer, that he should be obeyed. When the king read these dispatches, he sent for father de la Chaise, and reproached him severely with his presumption in daring to abuse his name, would not listen to his excuses, and commanded Torcy to disavow instantly what the Jesuit had written.

Madame de Maintenon, at the earnest intreaties of the bishop of Cambray, gave the king to understand that, to preserve peace in France, this contest must be decided at Rome. The king did not oppose it; Fenelon took his silence for a permission, and afterwards for an order, and accordingly wrote to the pope.

Cardinal

Cardinal de Bouillon offered to hasten his journey under pretence that his presence was necessary there, because he was to succeed to the place of dean of the sacred college after the deaths of Cibo and Altieri; he assured Fenelon, that he would manage it so as to become master of all the deliberations: but to secure the success of his negociation, he desired that he might be charged with the king's affairs at the court of Rome. Father de la Chaise represented to Janson, that it was time he should enjoy the benefits with which the king designed to reward his service. Janson fell into this snare, and, in all his dispatches, entreated that cardinal de Bouillon might be sent speedily to succeed him, alledging, that the title of the king's ambassador joined to that of dean of the sacred college, would be very advantageous to the interests of the nation.

The king had an aversion to Bouillon; he remembered the affair of the intercepted letters, and could never pardon him for having attempted to procure for his nephew the title of prince Dauphin, on account of his principality of Dauphine in Auvergne; but Pontchartrain and Torcy were gained over, and Bouillon was appointed ambassador. Vain, restless, ambitious, obliged to the Jesuits for his recall from banishment, a personal enemy to Noailles, an intimate friend of Fenelon's, proud of his birth, made more insolent by his misfortunes, without abilities for affairs of the least consequence, presumptuous enough to undertake the most difficult and important, who wished for nothing more ardently than to give trouble to the king, whom he could never forgive for his exile and the loss of the bishoprick of Liege: such was Bouillon, now ambassador from the king to Rome, and attentive only to the interests of the archbishop of Cambray. He made Charonier, the Jesuit, his Chaplain, a man remarkable for his affectation of quoting the poets, his gross flattery, and his obscene conversation.

The fatigue of the journey, or the change of climate, had such an effect upon Bouillon's constitution, that soon after his arrival at Rome, he was seized with a disorder which terminated in a real frenzy. All day
he

he was melancholy, and sunk in the extremest dejection; at night he was raving, he neither eat nor slept, his mind was agitated with the most gloomy ideas, and he was obliged to be watched incessantly, lest he should make any attempt upon his life: however, the baths of Frescati restored him to health, and cured his disordered brain.

Fenelon continued to protest his readiness to submit, and Bossuet his resolution to pursue him. 'I will rise my voice, even to heaven, against his errors,' said he, 'the cause of God shall never be basely abandoned: although I should be alone in this opposition, yet alone will I resist all. Souls are in danger; but God will never abandon either his church or me: whatever happens, truth will be triumphant, and error founded *.' If this vehement prelate had been condemned, can it be imagined that he would have submitted?

CHAPTER LXVIII.

Fenelon sent back to his diocese.

July 1697. **T**HE king, who had not yet deprived Fenelon of his post of preceptor to the princes, would not permit him to go in person to Rome to solicit his affair, and proposed to him to have a conference with the bishop of Meaux. Fenelon seemed desirous of avoiding the dispute, either because he hated Bossuet, or was apprehensive, that he should be overwhelmed with his imperious volubility. However, at Hebert's persuasion, he sacrificed his resentment to the love of truth; and consented to the proposed conference, provided that cardinal de Noailles and eight doctors of divinity were present, and that a secretary was permitted to take down in writing the objections and their answers †. He delivered these conditions

* Account of Quietism, p. 264.

† Manuscript memoirs of the bishop of Agen.

conditions in writing to father Valois, who acted the part of a mediator, that he might keep his place, and serve his friend.

Father la Combe, who was confined at Vincennes, confessed all that had passed between madame Guion and him; he once wrote a letter * to his penitent, in which he recalled to his remembrance their former familiarities, and exhorted her to repentance. Cardinal Noailles caused this letter to be read to madame Guion, who immediately exclaimed, to father la Combe, 'Most unhappy man! oh my God, how impenetrable are thy judgments!'

Madame Guion's woman, and a gentleman belonging to the duke of Orleans, accused her of having had criminal intrigues; she was sent to the Bastile, and her defender was now irrevocably ruined. This letter of father de la Combe's threw the king into an excess of rage: he looked upon madame Guion as a corrupter of virtue; the dutchesses de Guiche, de Mortimar, de Sully, de Chevreuse, and de Beauvilliers, as corrupted, Fenelon as a protector of vice; and madame de Maintenon as an accomplice in all the evils she had concealed. He often recalled to his remembrance the devout conferences at the hôtel de Beauvilliers, and always with new bitterness; and who knows how far his suspicions went? if we may judge by those transports of rage to which he was so little accustomed, they spared not the purest virtue, or the most unblemished character.

Mean time, Fenelon, surrounded by his friends, dissipated his uneasiness by the innocent pleasures of an easy and enlivened conversation. The abbé de Langeron entered the room with a dejected air: 'Have you received a letter from Flanders, my Lord?' said he, 'yes,' replied the archbishop, 'have they informed you of what has happened?' resumed the abbé, 'yes,' answered

* Manuscript memoirs of the bishop of Agen, p. 508, 509.

the archbishop, 'they have;' 'but have they told you,' said the abbé, 'that all your furniture, your books, and papers, are burned?' 'yes, my dear abbé,' returned the archbishop, 'I know all this, and I am already comforted.'

He resumed with great calmness the agreeable conversation which Langeron had interrupted. When a few minutes afterwards a letter from the king was delivered to him, he opened it without any precipitation, found he was ruined, and did not discover the least emotion or change of colour; just mentioned it to his friends, and then continued his discourse.

Fenelon, though so suddenly banished to his diocese, still preserved his post of preceptor to the princes: this was all that the king granted to the intreaties of madame de Maintenon, and the tears of the duke of Burgundy. Cardinal de Noailles, and the bishop of Chartres, who had formed great hopes from the conferences having been accepted, were convinced that the bishop of Meaux had put some secret spring in motion to punish the archbishop for his obstinacy.

These two prelates were not enemies to the doctrine of the interior life; and probably, if they had not been apprehensive, that the book of *Maxims* was rather an apology for madame Guion, than an explication of the sentiments of the Mysticks, they would have been silent, or perhaps have joined Fenelon. The bishop of Chartres had often declared, that his sentiments were the same as Fenelon's, but that he expressed them differently; and the archbishop of Paris seemed in these words of his *Pastoral Instruction*, to engage himself in the defence of disinterested love. *Let us not blame that excess to which souls are carried by love; the measure of the love of God is to love without measure.*

Madame de Maintenon did not think herself entitled to enter into an affair which was laid before the holy see; she therefore expected in silence the decision of the church; but she entirely rooted out of Saint-Cyr, the principles of the Mysticks: she exhorted madame
de

de la Maison-fort to conform to the ordinances, to walk towards God in more simple paths, and to resume her former imperfections, rather than to preserve those which she had acquired by her chimeras. Madame de la Maison-fort obeyed, but very soon afterwards she had new visions.

Bossuet, notwithstanding all his endeavours, was not able to convince her of her errors, because she thought she had shewn great want of candour in so boldly condemning in Fenelon what he durst not condemn in the saints. The bishop sought to reconcile a profound respect for the mystical writers, with an absolute contempt for their defender; and this was not possible.

From Cambray, Fenelon wrote a most edifying letter to the duke de Beauvilliers. In this letter, he neither complained of the king's severity, the injustice of his enemies, nor the cabals of those who envied him. He appeared calm, resigned, superiour to adversity, ready to submit, and convinced that disinterested love ought to be defended with the most perfect disinterestedness. This letter, which was printed in Paris, and translated into Italian, gained him a great number of partisans.

Bossuet, who rather chose to argue upon prayer than to pray himself, wrote an answer to this letter. To terms which declared the most perfect resignation, he gave a sense which expressed a determined opposition; 'Already said he, his obedience is arming itself against expected defeats; and we shall see resumed those subtle refinements, which have given so much trouble to past ages, and will weary our own.'

He openly reproached the archbishop of Cambray with insinuating that prayer was persecuted, that he might have the honour of falling a martyr to it, and engaged in theological reasoning, which dazzled the churchmen, and tired every one besides: even his friends were mortified at the bitterness of his zeal; the ministers disapproved of it; Fleuri, Catalan, Lange-

ron,

ron, blamed him loudly; and what did not his enemies say? his Apocalypse was a meer revery; his notes upon David and Solomon pedantick; his variations were a fine romance; his exposition of the catholick faith a mean palliation of the doctrine of the church. Bossuet was not ignorant of these censures; he knew who propagated them; he might have ruined them with a single word; yet he had them often at his table, either to oppose charity to malice, or to make them witnesses of his triumph, or perhaps for both these reasons. *

CHAPTER LXIX.

Writings for and against the book of Maxims.

THE dispute grew warmer every day: scarce did a book of Bossuet's appear, when it produced several answers from the archbishop of Cambray. Fenelon told him, with an engaging softness, that he was the most outrageous of men. Bossuet, replied with fury, 'and you the most artful: far from finding in you the humility of a bishop, I neither find that of a christian, nor even of a man.'

The intentions of this prelate might be right, but certainly his malignity can never be justified; for when Fenelon protested that he would submit to the decision of the church, Bossuet never failed to cry out, that he would not submit. He was entitled by his function to attack error, but not to render the person who was guilty of it, odious. I had patience enough to read all these writings, and I never found any answer of Bossuet to these words of Fenelon: † *I am that author whom you pretend to love so affectionately, yet would precipitate with Molinos into the abyss of Quietism. You lament my misfortunes, and while you lament me you tear my reputation in pieces.*

Saint

* An Account of Quietism. Part II. p. 4.

† Letter to the bishop of Meaux.

Saint Francis de Salles was quoted by each party : it would have been better if both had abandoned him. Fenelon was to blame for following him, and Bossuet for explaining him. * The bishop of Meaux shewed as much unwillingness to acknowledge the errors of St. Francis de Salles, as the archbishop of Cambray to acknowledge his own ; they both, by substituting authority in the place of reason, had engaged themselves in difficulties which they could not remove. Bossuet, astonished at the genius and eloquence of his adversary, trembled, or pretended to tremble, for religion. The countess of Grignan asking him one day, whether the archbishop of Cambray had so much wit as he was said to have. ‘ Ah ! madame,’ replied Bossuet, ‘ he has wit enough to make him extremely dangerous.’

Sept.

* “ Spiritual lovers, spouses of the king of heaven, gaze at themselves, purify, and adorn themselves, as much as possible ; not to be perfect, not for their own satisfaction, nor for the pleasure of contemplating themselves, nor to acquire a place in heaven, but to obey their spouse ; they do not purify themselves that they may be pure ; they do not adorn themselves to appear beautiful, but only to please their lover, to whom, if ugliness was more agreeable than beauty, they would prefer ugliness to beauty itself. *St. Francis de Salles to mother de Chantal, and elsewhere.* Yes, they would even prefer hell to paradise, if they knew that in hell they should have a little more divine pleasure than in paradise ; so that if by the imagination of a thing impossible, they knew that damnation was a little more agreeable to God than salvation, they would quit salvation and turn to damnation.” The writing of Saint Francis de Salles is full of passages as singular as this. Here we must drop the saint, confess that he has been a mere man, and allow that the archbishop of Cambray was to blame to copy so new a saint.

Sept. 1698.] Madame de Maintenon, equally solicitous to preserve among her children purity of faith as well as innocence of manners, intreated the king to dismiss three nuns from Saint-Cyr, whose obstinacy had resisted the arguments of the bishops of Chartres and Meaux. The king went himself to Saint-Cyr with the dutchess of Burgundy: he caused the community to be assembled, and represented in very strong terms the danger of new opinions; told them that Quietism should not resist him who had crushed Janfenism; forbid them ever to receive again those obstinate nuns; protested that he took those precautions to secure the house of St. Lewis against the shocks which it might receive after his death; and several times repeated, *a restless and singular turn of mind is every where to be dreaded.*

He did not stop here; he was apprehensive that the merit and talents of the ladies de la Maison-fort, de Tour, and de Montaigle, who had been dismissed, should one day inspire the community with an inclination to recal them: he wrote from Compiègne to the superiour, that it was his express command, these ladies should not be again received into the community, either during his life, or after his death.

Saint-Cyr, always faithful to the intentions of its founder, has ever since preserved the treasure of faith with so much the more care, as it has been taught by a domestick example how easily it might be lost. Madame de Maintenon established a maxim there, with which errors may sometimes be committed, but blame can never be incurred; and this maxim is an inviolable attachment to the holy see, and a blind submission to him who fills it.

CHAPTER LXX.

Calumny refuted.

THE polemical writings were continued upon both sides. Fenelon complained that his adversary wanted to make him an heretick, in spite of him-

himself. Two bishops gave each other publicly the lye; the faithful were scandalized at it, the libertines laughed, the duke de Nevers wrote satires, the king said, 'I thought they would have been silent till 'Rome had spoke.'

The wise were afflicted to see two of the greatest geniuses of France employ their time and their wit in works which would sink into oblivion with the disputes which occasioned them. The criticks observed, that neither of these prelates attacked the moral character of the other, although the connections of one with madame Guion had given room for a great deal of calumny, and the other's friendship for mademoiselle de Vieux de Mauleon, had already furnished Jurieu * with satyrical stories.

The friends of Bossuet (and no man ever had more) still extol his moderation, and pretend that he might have ruined his enemy if he had not suppressed the examination of madame Guion, who had charged Fenelon with having, according to that expression in the song of songs, *Climbed up the palm tree and gathered the fruit.* A base and absurd calumny; base, for I have seen the original of the verbal process in the hand of the abbé Pirot, and Fenelon is not mentioned in it; absurd, for after the reproaches with which the king loaded those who had concealed Fenelon's friendship for her, how improbable is it that they should have dared to conceal her crimes? would the lieutenant of police have connived at this secrecy, he who would have wrote a treatise against the Quietists, who was less apprehensive of the reasonings of Reynie, than of those letters de cachet, which are seldom reasonable. The virtue of the archbishop of Cambray remained unshaken in a quarrel where his adversaries were continually exclaiming that virtue was destroyed: even the character of madame Guion was at last cleared by the solemn testimony of an assembly of the clergy.

P 2

CHAP.

* See Jurieu's pastoral letters to the sectaries of France. F. de la Chaise said, that the bp. of Meaux was more of a Mauleonist than a Molenist. See the age of Lewis XIV.

CHAPTER LXXI.

Fenelon's book examined at Rome.

THE king wrote to the pope in very severe terms against the book of *Maxims*. Bouillon reported, that this letter had been extorted from Lewis by cardinal de Noailles and the bishop de Meaux.

The congregation of the holy office named seven persons in religious orders for examiners, and not one bishop, 'Because,' said the abbé Philippeaux with great simplicity, 'the prelates of Rome do not understand religious affairs, and leave theology to the monks;' however the Gallican church shews more deference and respect for the decisions of such an assembly, than for those of a general assembly of her own clergy. Truth is not easily discovered at a distance, they may say, *Rome has declared*, and names govern the world.

Each bishop had his solicitor at Rome: Cambray had the abbé de Chanterac, his uncle and his grand vicar; and Meaux, the abbé Bossuet his nephew. Bossuet was represented as the oracle of the church of France, and Fenelon as persecuted by a league of bishops who were enemies to the court of Rome, and protected by the jesuits, who being accused of alledging that divine love should not begin in sinners, maintained the necessity of that love in the just. So certain it is that a dispute upon religion is a mere party affair.

The assembly had sat two or three times, when the archbishop of Cambray had but two voices against five. Cardinal de Bouillon endeavoured, but in vain, to exclude *consulteurs* from these debates, whose learning and candour were well known, and to substitute others in their place more pleasing to the Holy Ghost. He could obtain but two bishops, le Drou and Rudolovic, who were more ignorant than all the *monsignors* together*.

The

* An account of Quietism, by the abbé Philippeaux, theologian to the abbé Bossuet.

The admission of these two prelates produced warm debates in the congregation, and a scandalous division. The archbishop of Cambray's friends triumphed, and maintained, that it was no longer possible to condemn the book. The pope, a weak prince, who had no opinion of his own, was grieved at a schism that was likely to throw dishonour upon the court of Rome : he added three other *consulteurs* to the former, and the book was again brought under examination.

The friends of Cambray reported at Rome, that ever since Fenelon had published his pastoral letter, the prejudices of Paris had been removed ; that the king, who was better informed of the nature of the dispute, had expressed great concern for what he had done in the first fervour of mistaken zeal ; that the archbishop of Paris, and the bishop of Chartres had abandoned Bossuet ; and that Europe looked upon Fenelon as a victim with the bishop of Meaux, jealous of his great abilities, was resolved to sacrifice to his own fame. Both parties supposed Rome to be inspired by the Holy Ghost, yet argued, wrote, and acted, as if that court could be only determined by worldly motives.

These reports suspended the judgment of the pope and of the congregation : before they pronounced sentence it was necessary to know what sentence would please the coercive power ; for without the sword and the faggot, what force could the decrees of that tribunal have, which decides arbitrarily upon opinions ?

They pressed the *consulteurs* to make an end, and overwhelmed them with books ; they hastened the sentence by importunities, and retarded it by immense reading. The pope, concerned at the fury with which the three bishops demanded a condemnation which they had anticipated, was apprehensive that he should endanger his authority ; the divines who examined the book were divided in their opinions, and the cardinals agreed no better in theirs.

Bouillon after various attempts, which had all proved unsuccessful, hoped to save the honour of his friend by proposing, that the reading of the book of *Maxims* should be prohibited till it was corrected. This expedient

dient was rejected. He then proposed to confirm the sound doctrine by canons which should be silent with regard to the book under examination. The *Meldists* warded off this stroke. At length, in the last meetings of the assembly, he thus addressed the sacred college :

‘ Who is it that you suppose you are condemning ?
 ‘ a theologian covered with the rust of colleges, a
 ‘ private man without dignity, without support ? undeceive yourselves ; it is an archbishop against whom
 ‘ you resolve to pronounce sentence, the greatest genius in the kingdom, a man devout in his life, wise in
 ‘ the government of his diocese ; a man who has done
 ‘ you the honour to lay his case before you on the
 ‘ first demand, who has recourse to the authority of
 ‘ the holy see, that authority so weakened and so despised by his enemies ; a divine whose doctrine is approved of by the wise and good, and only condemned
 ‘ by five wretched *Fratricelli*, without reputation,
 ‘ without learning, so obscure that I know not even
 ‘ their names. Reflect upon the consequence of your
 ‘ condemnation ; a thousand printed books will contradict your judgment ; you will for the future be
 ‘ no more able to teach disinterested love than to feel
 ‘ it. Condemn the archbishop of Cambray, if you
 ‘ will, he will find resources in his genius and in his
 ‘ friends. You may oppress him, he will never forsake
 ‘ himself ; you may humble him, his friends will exalt him.’

These threats gave great offence to the cardinals ; one of them replied, ‘ My lord cardinal, we are
 ‘ judges and not scholars.’ The pope was enraged at the insolence of Bouillon, who threatened him while he kissed his feet. ‘ This man,’ said he, ‘ never
 ‘ comes to me but to be rude ; he looks always like a
 ‘ hunted boar.’ Bouillon however, that he might excuse himself to the king, agreed with the cardinals in condemning the propositions which he had undertaken to defend. ‘ It is not for us,’ said he to them, ‘ to
 ‘ defend pure love, we who only know its contrary.’

CHAPTER LXXII.

The disgrace of Fenelon.

THE king being informed of the false reports which were propagated concerning his friendship for the archbishop of Cambray, and the advantage that was taken of this mistake, grieved that he had appointed a Quietist to be the preceptor to his children, and a Quietist to be also their confessor * enraged that his name had been abused, earnestly solicited the condemnation of the book of *Maxims*, and gave a publick testimony of his displeasure against Fenelon, which effectually destroyed the notion that had been conceived at Rome of his partial affection for that prelate: Fenelon lost his place of preceptor, and the pension annexed to it, notwithstanding the tears and intreaties of the duke of Burgundy.

All his relations were deprived of their employments; one of his brothers was dismissed from the marine, the abbé de Beaumont, his nephew; the abbé de Langeron, his friend; Du Puis and Leschelle, *menins* to the princess, were banished from the court; all his partizans were looked upon as guilty; to correspond with him by letters was a crime against the state: † the son of madame Guion had orders to quit the guards, where he served with distinction. The dukes of Beauvilliers, Guiche, Chevreuse, and Sully, were apprehensive of being involved in the disgrace of their friend; it was talked of publicly at court, and earnestly desired by the Jansenists and the courtiers, the former because the archbishop of Cambray had robbed them of the duke de Chevreuse, the latter because the virtue of the duke de Beauvilliers mortified them as much as his great favour at court. It was debated in

P 4

private

* Father Valois, a jesuit, who had been placed by Fenelon about the princess.

† MS. Memoirs of the bishop of Agen, p. 520.

private council, whether that nobleman should not be banished from court.

The king durst not condemn the governor of his grand-children unheard. The duke de Beauvilliers, after having briefly recounted to him the beginning and progress of this affair, added these words: 'I have no reproach to make myself with regard to Quietism; I am what I have ever been, humbly submissive to all the decisions of the church. If the archbishop of Cambray's opinions are erroneous, those opinions are not mine. In matters of faith, my judgment is regulated by my curate, and not by my friend. Either the whole court is as guilty as I am, or I am as innocent as the whole court. The education of the princes is not endangered by being confided to my care; they are so far from having the sentiments of Quietists, that they are even ignorant of their nature. I know, sire, that I am accused of fatiguing them with too fervent prayers: if Rome condemns this, I will reduce them to the mere recital of the chaplet. I am the work of your majesty; you have raised me, you can throw me down; in the will of my prince I will acknowledge the will of God. I shall retire from court with the regret of having displeased you, and with the hope of living easier for the future.' The king appeared satisfied with these sentiments.

Madame de Maintenon was inconsolable for the archbishop's disgrace. The bishop of Meaux had put it out of her power to support him, by telling the king that the court of Rome would never resolve to condemn a man whom it supposed to be supported by her. She could not shew any compassion for him; the salvation of the princes was more dear to her than the fortune of her friend; she durst not speak lest she should strengthen the king's suspicions. Her grief thus suppressed corrupted her blood, she was seized with a dangerous illness. 'You are then resolved to die for this fellow,' said the king to her.

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This harshness, added to her affliction. Lewis, whose heart was torn with uneasy doubts, reproached her with her connections with Fenelon, and those private conversations which he had been so long ignorant of. Madame de Maintenon could no otherwise remove these dangerous prejudices than by never mentioning the name of Fenelon. This affair is very differently related by Ramsay, who attributes the archbishop's disgrace to the secret practices of madame de Maintenon, meanly jealous of that prelate's favour with the king, who could not endure him in his presence*.

But why did not madame de Maintenon endeavour to prevent the precipitate disgrace of a man for whom she had so great a friendship? Why did she not intreat the king to take no resolution against him before he was condemned by Rome? This is the question which I asked the marchioness de * * *, who was a long time intimately acquainted with madame de Maintenon and the archbishop of Cambray; and here follows her answer, word for word: *If madame de Maintenon's acknowledged virtue would have permitted the king to have entertained any jealous suspicions, they would have fallen upon the archbishop of Cambray.*

Bouillon was thunder-struck with the letter which brought him an account of these changes, yet his friendship for Fenelon continued inviolable. 'It is my glory,' said he, 'to have served my friend.' He was told that he would ruin himself. 'A man of my quality,' answered he, 'can not be easily ruined; such as Noailles may fall, but Bouillon never.' His flatterers persuaded him, that he was in friendship what Turenne was in war.

It was little for madame de Maintenon to be forced to conceal her grief in her own breast; she was reduced to the necessity of betraying the confidence which Fenelon, in happier times, had reposed in her. Honour, zeal, compassion, tore her heart by turns. At Rome it was reported, that the archbishop of Cambray had
P 5 been

* Ramsay's Life of Fenelon.

been intimately connected with madame Guion ; his friends denied it : at Paris they were busy in producing proofs. Madame de Maintenon had been imprudent enough to say, that the archbishop of Cambray had formerly wrote to her upon this subject ; the bishop of Chartres told this in confidence to Bossuet, who replied, that the interest of religion would not admit of these delicacies of friendship : the same reason was urged to madame de Maintenon, as if truth could only triumph by an act of perfidiousness. Madame de Maintenon was weak enough to give the bishop of Chartres a copy of his letter *, and to shew the original of it to the nuncio : a copy of it was sent to Rome, other copies were distributed by the abbé Bossuet among the cardinals ; Bouillon was disconcerted, the abbé de Chantillac was silent, Fenelon wrote a long apology, but nobody regarded it.

This letter determined the congregation of the cardinals, who, but for the imprudent zeal of madame de Maintenon, or her breach of faith, and the recantation so seasonably forced from father la Combe, would probably have sent the parties out of court. This affair had always been thought by the pope to be of little consequence ; *Cambray*, said he, *has sinned thro' his excess of love for God, and Meaux for want of love to his neighbour.*

His holiness observing that the cardinals were offended with Fenelon for having destroyed hope, and Bossuet for lessening charity : ‘ It is faith,’ said he, ‘ that is in danger, and none of you think of that.’ In France they were apprehensive that the church was in danger ; at Rome, where one diviner cannot see another without laughing, it was asked from whence these fears of France proceeded ?

C H A P.

* It is in the collection of the letters.

CHAPTER LXXIII.

Fenelon is condemned and submits.

Mar. 13. 1699. **A**FTER many debates cardinal Cazanata drew up a brief which displeased both parties: the friends of Cambray alledged that a brief had no force in parliament, and could not make a law of the doctrine. The pope intended to have given a bull. The partizans of Bossuet said that the exordium was dry and mean; they were surprized that no mention was made of Molinos or Quietism, that those who defended the book of *Maxims* were not excommunicated; that the propositions contained in it were not stiled heresies; that the pope should venture to declare that he had pronounced sentence *motu proprio*, when he had been solicited to it by the king and by the archbishop of Cambray.

It is remarkable that this brief did not condemn the mystical authors which Fenelon had explained; their doctrine crushed in his book, triumphed in their own. It must be confessed that Fenelon's crime was the having drawn it from the obscurity that involved it; when freed from that unintelligible gibberish in which it was conveyed, it appeared new; it shocked the faithful, and terrified the divines; the arts of cabal, the power of authority, the force of reasoning; all were employed to destroy errors, which, thanks to the progress that natural philosophy has made in our climate, must necessarily destroy themselves. The visions of asceticks are only believed and propagated in those countries where the sun inflames the imagination and dries up the brain; there libertines, who never think they are loved enough, rush into the excesses of profane love; and the devout, who are always apprehensive that they can never love sufficiently, into that love they call divine.

Fenelon was greatly affected with this brief; but his humility, or perhaps a generous pride, silenced the specious suggestions of vanity; he had promised submission, and he did submit without restriction or reserve: when

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he ascended the episcopal chair, and pronounced his own condemnation, the whole assembly burst into tears.

He afterwards published a mandate against his book, for which the pope congratulated him. His readiness in submitting, justified him in the hearts of all men; it was blamed only by Jurieu, who attributed it to meanness, and by Bossuet, who accused him of dissimulation. Those who had been pleased with the opportunity of disputing with a heretick, had not the additional pleasure of persecuting a rebel*. His enemies were enraged at it; they had flattered themselves with an act of disobedience, which would have justified their premature censures: and when they saw the most perfect submission they demanded a formal recantation, such as had been readily granted by the dukes de Chevreuses and Beauvilliers, who preserved their employments by abjuring the *little church*, but irrevocably lost the king's favour for having once approved it.

The king recalled the cardinal de Bouillon, who left Rome immediately, in obedience to his majesty's orders, but returned with as much expedition when he heard that the place of dean of the sacred college was vacant by the death of cardinal Cibo.

The king sent orders to the prince of Monaco, his ambassador at Rome, to demand Bouillon to resign the order

* The bishop of Agen, in his memoirs, page 529 and 530, assures us, that Bossuet had given out, that the archbishop of Cambray would not submit, and had said some words to him to that effect. In page 537 he also assures us, that the bishop of Meaux was publicly accused with having dispatched several couriers to monsieur de Valbelles, bishop of St. Omer, and suffragan to Cambray, with earnest entreaties to him to condemn the mandate of his metropolitan. The bishop of St. Omer's compliance gave great offence to the whole provincial assembly; Cambray was also required to condemn all he had written in defence of his book, which surely was very unjust, since a text may be blameable, and its commentary not so.

order of the Holy Ghost, and the post of great almoner of France. The next day Pasquin appeared in the habit of a cardinal, in a suppliant posture, presenting a petition to the king of France, with these words of the prophet, *Ne projicias me à facie tuâ, & spiritum sanctum tuum ne auferas à me.* Cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy holy spirit from me.

In the provincial assembly summoned for the acceptance of the pope's brief, the bishop of Meaux inveighed so bitterly against the archbishop of Cambrai, that all who were present were greatly scandalized at his furious zeal. The assembly, notwithstanding the opposition made by Bossuet, decreed, that in the mandate of each bishop, thanks should be given to God for the great satisfaction which Fenelon's perfect submission had given to the church.

Fenelon, greater in his defeat than his enemy in his triumph, thought he owed his diocese a monument of his repentance: he caused a sun to be made for the exposition of the holy sacrament, supported by angels, one of whom trampled under his feet several heretical books, upon one of which was the title of his own.

Madame de Maintenon was greatly edified by his submission to the holy see; but the bishop of Chartres persuaded her, that the archbishop of Cambrai owed a still greater example of humility to the church; that barely submitting to its sentence was not sufficient; and that a prelate, convicted of false doctrine, was obliged to refute his errors with the same zeal with which he had propagated them. 'I shall never believe,' said she, 'that a man has renounced an erroneous opinion, till I see him attack it with as much force as he defended it.' However, as the pope was satisfied, madame de Maintenon was obliged to seem so likewise.

CHAPTER LXXIV.

Madame de Maintenon accused of being solicitous to have her marriage declared.

ALL Europe was astonished at the archbishop of Cambrai's disgrace, which was generally attributed to madame de Maintenon. At Paris, where Fene-

Fenelon's cabals at the court of Rome, Bouillon's treachery, and the king's sentiments, were not known, they were concerned for the misfortunes of the archbishop; and since they found he was not protected by madame de Maintenon, they supposed he was oppressed by her; they endeavoured to find out the cause of this unexpected persecution, and this was what they reported.

Madame de Maintenon, not contented with the high rank to which Lewis had raised her, was desirous of having her marriage declared; she accustomed the king to this expectation; she quoted to him the examples of several sovereigns who had not disdained to raise their subjects to the throne, and inspired him with a thousand scruples upon the scandal which their extreme familiarity occasioned, and to which the whole court was witness.

Lewis, unable to resist her importunities, resolved to be directed in the affair by the opinions of the most able casuists. Madame de Maintenon consulted the archbishop of Cambray, and father le Comte, confessor to the dutchess of Burgundy. As she had proposed the question under the characters of a young lady and a gentleman, they found no difficulty in deciding it, and their decision was agreeable to her wishes; but to father de la Chaise she opened her mind freely: the confessor saw the great importance of the question, and being apprehensive of her displeasure, evaded answering her, and proposed the archbishop of Cambray as a person who was very capable of deciding so delicate a point.

Fenelon was no less sensible of the danger of such a decision than the Jesuit. 'What have I done to you, father,' said he, 'that you seem resolved to ruin me?' Father de la Chaise replied, that the king expected him at the council of conscience*. 'Well,' resumed the archbishop, 'let us attend him there then;' *although Balac should give me his house full of gold and silver, yet would I say all that the Lord shall inspire me with.*

Noailles

* It is observable, that at that time there was no council of conscience.

Noailles *, archbishop of Paris, Bossuet, father de la Chaïse, father le Comte, and Fenelon, deliberated upon this question : the two former were for having the marriage declared, the two latter were against it. Father de la Chaïse did not give his opinion till he saw on what side the ballance lay, and read in the king's eyes which would be most agreeable to him ; the archbishop of Cambray, preferring the honour of France, of his master, and his pupils, to his own particular interest, represented to the king, that no scandal could be given by his manner of living with madame de Maintenon ; that no person was ignorant of the marriage, although it was not declared ; that France had too high an idea of the piety of its monarch, and the virtue of madame de Maintenon, to suppose their commerce to be a criminal one ; that the court, accustomed to their intimacy for twelve years, could not mistake the nature of it ; that, to give madame de Maintenon the title of queen, would dishonour the throne without raising her, who had almost all the honours of it.

Father de la Chaïse declared himself of this opinion, which was but weakly opposed by Noailles and Bossuet, who had only seemed of a contrary one to lay a snare for Fenelon. There needed no more to determine Lewis, Madame de Maintenon perceived that her design had failed, and in revenge caused the *Maxims of the Saints* to be condemned at Rome, procured the author's banishment from court, and raised father le Comte, two potent enemies in Tiberge and Brisacier †, who at the court of Rome accused the writings of that jesuit upon the Chinese ceremonies, of heresy. The dauphin acknowledged to Fenelon and to father le

* The authors of this tale say *Harlay*. But Harlay died in 1695, and father le Comte had not yet appeared at court.

† Madame de Maintenon had so little part in the prosecution carried on by Tiberge and Brisacier, that her friendship for them seemed lessened when she saw that they openly opposed the jesuits ; however, she was no favourer of that order.

le Comte, the obligation they had laid him under, by opposing the declaration of the marriage ; he embraced them, and expressed the highest regard for them ; but he was so enraged against the archbishop of Paris and the bishop of Meaux, that he treated them like insolent churchmen, whom nothing but his respect for the king, and their sacred habit, hindered from having thrown out of the window.

These reports were not propagated by the archbishop of Cambray, nor ought they to be imputed to him ; but by some imprudent partizans of his, who supposed they were doing him a service, and by some of his relations, who thought they increased his fame by making his courage and his fortitude the causes of his misfortunes.

This anecdote never gained credit with those who were acquainted with the court, and knew that it was not probable the king would consult Fenelon upon this affair ; or that Fenelon, if consulted, would dissuade him from an action equally indifferent to the good of the state or the honour of the royal family : but it has found a place in so many books *, that at present, notwithstanding its absurdity, it is necessary it should be refuted.

I do not pretend to deny that madame de Maintenon never suffered some wishes of ascending the throne to escape her ; which may well be pardoned, since any other woman in her place would have formed greater hopes, and expressed more ardent desires ; and we have not the least proof that she ever aimed at being declared queen. But I must beg leave to offer the following observations to the reader :

This little story is destroyed by what we have just related from the most exact and best attested memoirs ;
and

* See the life of the abbé de Choisi ; the history of Lewis XIV. by Limiers, vol. iii. the history of Lewis XIV. by Reboulet, vol. vii. Madame du Noyer's letters ; the manuscripts of madame de Bouju, a lady of St. Lewis.

and although we find it in all the compilations, intit-
led, *the history of Lewis the Fourteenth*, yet it would
have fallen in its birth, if madame de Noyer had not
given it a place in one of those romantick letters which
it is shameful to quote, although they are the source
of many anecdotes concerning Lewis XIV, and ma-
dame de Maintenon.

Who then is the inventor of this story? Not any
person well acquainted with the transactions of the
court; not Fenelon, nor madame du Noyer; she only
embellished it. The first traces of it may be found
in the memoirs of the abbé Philippeaux, who relates*,
that father Gentet, a jesuit, and penitentioner of St.
Peter, said publickly at Rome, that the persecution
raised against the archbishop of Cambray was owing to
his having opposed the declaration of the king's mar-
riage with madame de Maintenon, to which three bi-
shops, who were his enemies, had consented. Some
mistaken friends of Fenelon, hoping to strengthen his
party, repeated this fable, which flew from mouth to
mouth; but the abbé Philippeaux, who was then at
Rome, and knew every circumstance relating to the
affair, treats these reports as malicious falsehoods†.

The year in which this fact is placed destroys all
probability of its truth; it is in 1697: but father le
Comte was not appointed confessor to the dutchess of
Burgundy till the year 1698.

Either the archbishop of Cambray was then confessor
to madame de Maintenon, or he was not: if he was,
would she have engaged in this affair without consult-
ing him beforehand, and securing his vote in her fa-
vour?

* An account of Quietism, part i. page 305.

† Ramsay, who attributes the disgrace of the arch-
bishop of Cambray to madame de Maintenon, makes
her jealousy of his favour with the king, and not her
ambition, the cause of it. The bishop of Agen says,
that this disgrace gave rise to many different con-
jectures, and promises to be more particular concerning
it in the sequel of his memoirs, but that sequel is lost.

your ? if he was not, would she have consulted a man with whose conduct she was dissatisfied ?

They who suppose that Lewis XIV. sacrificed the archbishop of Cambray to the resentment of madame de Maintenon, mistake the character of that prince. If Fenelon made those remonstrances to the king which are attributed to him, his favour must necessarily be increased ; madame de Maintenon would not have dared to have formed a design of ruining him, and Lewis would never have consented to it ; nor were any solicitations used at Rome to procure a sentence against the book of *Maxims* ; the French ambassador was devoted to Fenelon.

The pretence of removing the scandal occasioned by the king's intimacy with madame de Maintenon, is weakly imagined. This scandal never existed : madame de Maintenon had given so many proofs of virtue in her youth, so many examples of piety in the court, that it was not probable she would have chose to become frail at an age when others grow more virtuous. Had this pretence been alledged at the beginning of the marriage, it might have had some appearance of truth, but twelve years afterwards it was ridiculous and absurd.

Those who knew madame de Maintenon in her elevation, those who have seen her in her retirement, knew her extreme humility, her aversion to grandeur, and her love of ease. Is it probable that a woman wholly employed in the care of her salvation, should have been desirous of appearing in her old age in the character of a queen ? which would force her from that solitude, and deprive her of that freedom she loved so much. In all her letters she complains of her slavery.

How improbable is it then, that she should pine after a slavery still greater ?

She had too great an interest in the king's honour, and was perhaps too much influenced by that prevailing prejudice which supposed that honour blemished by a match so disproportionate, to permit Lewis to raise her to a rank, which, after all, would have added nothing to her power, but have made her situa-
tion

tion more uneasy, by incumbering it with the fatigue of royalty. If she had been desirous of being declared queen of France, her wishes would have been granted: she was absolute mistress of the heart of Lewis; and they who suppose that Lewis, upon a mere point of honour, could have long resisted her solicitations, are but little acquainted with the power of love.

The story which I have refuted, supposes in madame de Maintenon a great desire to have her marriage made publick, and in the king an inclination to declare it; but how can we reconcile this to the silence of both? The husband died without confiding his secret to any person whatever; and the wife, before her death, caused all those papers to be burned which might confirm the report of her marriage with the king. How did it happen that madame de Maintenon, if ambitious and vain, as she was said to be, should never suffer any words to escape her which could make her rank suspected? She had often imprudent questions asked her; but on those occasions she always changed the conversation, and defeated all the arts of curiosity.

If any certain proofs of her marriage remain, we owe them to one of her friends, who preserved them from the flames: we owe one of them, and that of the greatest consequence, to her humility; it is a letter from the bishop of Chartres to the king, wrote after the peace of Ryswick. Madame de Maintenon was not willing that it should go in her packet, an account of the praises that were bestowed upon her; she therefore returned it to the bishop, and it was found amongst his papers by monsieur de Merinville, his successor, who gave it to the community of Saint-Cyr, with orders not to open it till after his decease*.

It was then no longer doubted that madame de Maintenon had formed a design of reigning in France; this story gained such general belief, that it was said, if the battle of Hochstet had not been lost, she would have been declared queen of France.

This

* See the pieces justificative.

This report prevailed more generally four years afterwards ; and probably it is less difficult to justify madame de Maintenon than Lewis XIV. When Lisle was besieged by Eugene, and defended by Boufflers, the duke of Burgundy, who had just lost the battle of Oudenard, advanced to succour that city : the duke de Vendôme, whom the prince had orders to obey, made so fine a disposition of his troops, that it was not possible for the allies to escape him ; he dispatched a courier to the king, to prepare him for an event which must necessarily finish the war. When the king heard this news, he went to the apartment of madame de Maintenon, and in the first transports of his joy he said to her, ‘ Your prayers are granted, madam ; Vendôme holds my enemies inclosed ; Lisle will be delivered, and you shall be queen of France.’

These words were heard and repeated ; they came to the knowledge of the dauphin ; he trembled for the honour of the royal family ; and, to ward off the blow with which it was threatened, he wrote to the duke of Burgundy, who loved his father as much as he feared his king, that at his return he would find two masters.

The dutchess of Burgundy conjured her husband, not to contribute by his valour to the giving her for her sovereign, a woman who was too meanly born to be her servant. The prince, overcome by these intreaties, hindered Lisle from being succoured.

This fact, which appeared doubtful to all those who were acquainted with the state of the court in the last years of Lewis XIV. is too generally believed, to be absolutely rejected. It is certain that all Europe attributed Vendôme’s retreat to the apprehensions of the dauphin, and the too ready obedience of his son. This report was spread even among foreigners, which occasioned those billets which the enemies threw among us, *Be easy, Frenchmen ; she shall not be your queen ; we will not raise the siege.*

It is not improbable that Lewis, in the first emotions of joy, which the certainty of an unhopèd-for victory gave him, a victory which would place him above his enemies, and above prejudice, should offer,

or

or promise the throne to madame de Maintenon ; but it is very improbable, that she should have expected, contrived, or even accepted of this offer ; and perhaps it is to her apprehensions of success, that we must attribute these words in one of her letters to madame du Perou, after the siege of Lisle : *Our princes have escaped a misfortune, which, in their opinions, is worse than death.*

In this particular fact, history does not accuse her, and her character justifies her : at that time also she was seventy-two years old ; and surely that is not an age to be dazzled with the splendor of royalty.

CHAPTER LXXV.

The true cause of Fenelon's disgrace.

THE archbishop of Cambray shewed no great solicitude to appear again at court ; nor did the king seem desirous of recalling him : Lewis suspected that he had condemned his book, rather through obedience than conviction : Madame de Maintenon durst not plead for him ; either, because she now looked upon him as a dangerous man, who had twice deceived her, or because she was afraid of rekindling the king's anger against a friend, whose doctrine had suffered the taint of heresy, than which nothing could be more dishonourable in the eyes of Lewis.

Fenelon, while preceptor to the duke of Burgundy, had composed for the instruction of his pupil, a moral romance, in which he united the majesty of Homer with the elegance of Virgil ; and all the charms of fable with all the energy of truth. Under his flowing pen, our language acquired new graces, the rights of the people had a defender, virtue a panegyrist, and good kings a model. The great principles of policy unveiled and put in motion, prepared the French nation for more glorious days, under a prince who was formed for their happiness. Fenelon did not imagine that this Book would become so fatal to its author, and so useful to the world.

A cele-

A celebrated writer * supposes that Fenelon wrote his *Telemachus* during his retirement ; he must therefore be ignorant, that the first edition of this work appeared in 1699, the same year when his dispute with Bossuet ended. How was it possible for so long a poem to be designed, wrote, stolen, and printed, in the space of a few months ?

Nor is it more likely that this poem was composed in 1695, than in 1699. The cares of the episcopate, the book of *Maxims*, the apprehensions of being dismissed from court, the process at Rome, all gave Fenelon too much employment, to permit him to write so long a romance, and to compose it with scarce a blot † in the whole.

Although his cotemporaries ‡ had not told us that it was wrote for the duke of Burgundy while yet a child, it is evident, that we must place the composition of this work, at a time when Fenelon had that leisure which the muses demand ; that intimate connexion with the court, to which we owe so many striking pictures ; that vigorous youth, which so rapidly pursues its purpose ; that sensibility which seizes the passions, enlivens the style, and sports with the graces.

The duke of Burgundy earnestly intreated the king to recal Fenelon. The king was so far from complying, that he forbid the duke to hold any correspondence with him. The preceptor and the pupil disobeyed : Fenelon's letters to the prince passed thro' the hands of the duke de Beauvilliers. *The directions for the Conscience of a king* || were the fruits of this concealed correspondence. There the duties of a sovereign were boldly painted ; the vain chimeras of independent power destroyed, and the observance of the

* Voltaire's age of Lewis XIV.

† Ibid. This author says, that he had seen the manuscript, and that there is scarce ten blots in the whole. The family corrected the style in every edition.

‡ Memoirs of the bishop of Agen.

|| Since published by monsieur de St. Felix.

the laws, the love of virtue, and the mutual respect between the monarch and his subjects, made the foundation of public happiness.

This work, which was discovered to be in the duke of Burgundy's possession, filled Lewis with indignation; he was surprised to see the picture of a good king, and grieved that that picture was not his own.

Fenelon from time to time reviewed the adventures of Telemachus; and gave the loose sheets to a valet de chambre to transcribe, who took a copy for himself. The archbishop having dismissed this domestick upon some disgust, he made several copies of the work which he had stolen, and sold them to the curious. Several persons of the highest distinction, met at each other's houses to hear it read: they were never satisfied with praising the beauties which they found in it, and those which they imagined they found. The archbishop of Cambray purchased all the copies he could find, in order to suppress the book; not because he thought it dangerous, but because he considered it as imperfect. The valet de chambre, to satisfy the eager curiosity of the public, caused it to be published in parts.

The first part inspired an eager impatience for the following ones. In fifteen months twenty editions of it were sold. It was said, that the *The Maxims of the Saints* was a romance; and that the romance was the maxims of kings. The public discovered it to be a satire against the government; they made applications: Calypso, was the marchioness of Montespan; Eucharis, mademoiselle de Fontange; Telemachus, the duke of Burgundy; Mentor, the duke de Beauvilliers; Antiope, the dutchess of Burgundy; the character of Protefilaus, resembled that of Louvois; Idomeneus, was king James; and Sesostris, Lewis XIV.

This book had enemies of every kind. The men of letters, who had been forced to join the general applause, through envy criticised the anachronisms*,
the

* MS. memoirs of the bishop of Agen.

the careless phrases, the frequent repetitions, and had the mortification to find their criticisms refuted by the publick contempt. The devotees were displeased to see an ecclesiastick giving the amours of Calypso and Eucharis, for the first lessons to the heir of the crown; and the Antiquetists reported, that Fenelon, in revenge for his dismissal from court, made use of the grandfather's faults, to form instructions for the conduct of the grandson. Madame de Maintenon, says Hébert *, was the first who directed the king to this invidious inference; but this is not probable.

The archbishop of Cambray was grieved at the success of his book; the courtier and the author equally suffered; the author, from the imperfections in the work; the courtier from the imputation of satire. The king read it; and either through prejudice, or the secret whispers of conscience, he saw himself throughout the whole. One day he said, in the presence of Fagon and Felix; 'I knew by the book of *Maxims*, that the archbishop of Cambray had a weak head; but till I read the adventures of Telemachus, I did not know that he had a bad heart. No one ever carried ingratitude farther; he has endeavoured in every page of that book, to decry my reign †.'

Fagon and Felix represented to him, that the malignity was not in the book, but the readers; that nothing was more easy than to attribute satirical strokes against the government to historians and moralists, who were best affected to it; that it was not possible to accuse the author, of having described his majesty, since he had painted only bad kings; and that, abstracted from his designs, which only God could certainly know, all the objections of envy and malice might be silenced, by asking, whether it were not to be wished, that the duke of Burgundy should resemble Telemachus.

These bold truths reflected great honour on the first physician and surgeon; but could not convince the king.

* MS. memoirs of the bishop of Agén. † Ibid.

king. Hébert informed Fenelon of this conversation, who in vain repeated what his friends had before said in his defence. In vain, in a letter to madame de Maintenon, he represented to her, that by putting a fabulous history in the hands of the princes, his design had been to keep them free from the faults connected with their station, and to inspire them with virtues suitable to their rank; and that such pictures, which in him it was a crime to draw, he could point out in every book of that kind. All his arguments were ineffectual to clear him of designed satire; when princes have once violated truth, they never repair their fault. Fenelon was, by the wise, looked upon as a victim devoted, in spite of himself, to the publick good.

The jesuits, however, still entertained hopes of his being restored to favour; they knew his sincere attachment to them; and they had given proofs of their gratitude, by the severe punishment they inflicted on father de la Rue, for having declaimed against him in the pulpit.

Father de la Chaize lost no opportunity of softening the king; the virtues of the archbishop of Cambray furnished him with many. This prelate resigned fifteen thousand livres a year out of his revenue, to relieve the curates of his diocese from the heavy burthen of the free gift: a burthen so little felt by the superior clergy, so oppressive to the inferiour. The confessor extolled this sacrifice to the king, who heard it, and was silent.

The garrison of Cambray revolted on account of its being ill paid. The archbishop sold all his lands to furnish money for the arrears, and calmed the sedition. The king appeared unmoved with a service so important in a frontier city, surrounded with enemies, and still fond of its antient masters. Notwithstanding this inflexibility, the Jesuits never ceased to remind him, that the archbishop of Cambray had rejected with horror, the offers made him by the Jansenists, of their labours, their pens, their friends, and their interest, in support of his book, at a time when he was overwhelmed on all sides.

They informed the king of the extreme attention shewn by the archbishop to the sick officers ; of his benevolence to the soldiers ; his endeavours to retain the people in their duty ; his zeal in opposing father Quesnel ; and in converting the duke of Orleans : but not all his virtues could induce the king to pardon the writer, who accused him of having for fifty years mistaken the principles of the art of reigning.

Madame de Maintenon was silent ; but she never ceased to love the illustrious and unfortunate Fenelon. When mademoiselle d'Osmond married the marquis d'Havrincourt, among other instructions for her conduct, she advised her to see the bishop of Arras often, whose piety and disinterestedness the king greatly esteemed ; but being informed that Havrincourt was in the diocese of Cambray ; ' Ah, daughter !' said she, in a tone that expressed great satisfaction, but with a mysterious look, ' how happy are you to be so near that man ! do what I advised you, with regard to monsieur d'Arras : see him often, but never mention it.'

When the duke of Burgundy entered Flanders, the archbishop of Cambray went post to meet him at the place where the duke stopped to dine. The archbishop presented him the napkin, which the duke received very gravely ; he stood behind his chair, and said something to enliven the conversation ; but the prince shewed no attention to him. All who were present were concerned at a silence so mortifying to the prelate ; but the duke of Burgundy, saluting him when he rose from table, said, ' Adieu, monsieur, I am sensible of the obligations I have to you ; and you know my sentiments with regard to you.'

Others pretend that he said to him, ' I have done all that I could ; but hope still.' They added, that certain persons, who were well acquainted with the state of affairs, comprehended the meaning of these words ; and that the Jansenists feigned to extend it to some supposed accommodation for the peace of the church, which they said had been projected by the duke of Burgundy and the archbishop of Cambray :
but

but the first words are certainly true. I heard them from the marchioness de ****, who was present, and who said to the archbishop of Cambray, 'These words deserve to be recorded in your archives.'

Fenelon, finding that all the avenues of the court were shut against him, expected in the exercise of his duty the time when they should again be opened to him. Death snatched him from his country and from the church, both of which incessantly required him, and at the moment when the wishes of both were going to be granted. The king was very little moved with the excellent letter which Fenelon in his last moments had written to father le Tellier. 'Then he is dead,' said the king, 'that man who always repaid my kindness to him with ingratitude.'

These words are very different from those which were attributed to madame de Maintenon. 'He died,' said she, 'very unfortunately for the church and for himself; the king would soon have recalled him, and he would have been very useful to us in the present troublesome situation of affairs.'

However that may be, if he had survived the king, it is highly probable that the regent, who loved him, would have given him a share in the administration. Princes, in whom imagination is predominant, are ever ready to employ men of genius.

but the first words are certainly true. I tested them from the manuscript of *de Montaigne*, who was present, and who has to the Archbishop of Cambray. These words therefore to be recorded in your history. The French, having that all the avenues of the court were shut against him, expected in the exercise of his duty the time when they should again be opened to him. Dault rejected him from his country and from the church, both of which incessantly required him, and at the moment when he was going to be crowned, he was moved with the excellent resolution in his last moments had with respect to the king. 'Then he is dead,' said the king. 'I never always repaid my debts to him with ingratitude.'



These words are very different from those which were attributed to Montaigne de Montaigne. He died, said he, very ungenerously for the church and for himself; the king would soon have recalled him, and he would have been very useful to us in the present troublesome situation of affairs.

However that may be, if he had survived the king, it is highly probable that the king who loved him would have given him a share in the administration. Places in which imagination is predominant are ever ready to employ men of genius.

